First Call for Children

The essential needs of children should be given priority in bad times as well as good' — Plan of Action, World Summit for Children

Children and the environment

UNICEF/1850/86/Sean Sprague

Environmental disaster is a way of life for millions of children each day. They live under the toxic cloud of poverty, in urban settlements blighted, like the one above, by open sewers and ramshackle hovels where disease and despair breed, or in impoverished rural communities. As the world musters statistics on temperature change and carbon dioxide emissions, in preparation for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in June this year, the telling figures of young lives wasted and lost through environmental degradation need also to be stressed. In this issue of ***First Call for Children***, arguments are made that by focusing on children and sustainable development, the world can reduce the stark contrast between the misery of many, which forces them to further degrade their environments, and the affluence of a few, whose overconsumption poses a far greater challenge to the world's future. The issue also reports on the success of the baby-friendly hospital initiative, on a new optimism about Africa and on the work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

January-March/1992/No. 1

unicef
United Nations Children's Fund

First Call for Children

'The essential needs of children should be given priority in bad times as well as good' — *Plan of Action, World Summit for Children*

A UNICEF Quarterly/1992/No. 1 January-March 1992

NEW PRIORITY TAKES SHAPE FOR COMING EARTH SUMMIT

Placing children on the environment agenda

By Yin Yin Nwe

In less than six months, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also called the Earth Summit, will take place in Rio de Janeiro. Commitments will be made at Rio and a process will be initiated to "find a common basis for action to protect the future of planet Earth, and to secure for all its inhabitants a more sustainable and more equitable future", according to an UNCED booklet.

In that process, the first call should be for children. Many of the most publicized environmental issues, such as global warming, depletion of the ozone layer and destruction of tropical rain forests, however, don't appear, at first glance, to have much to do with children. I was told by an UNCED official that the link is that children are the most vulnerable to environmental degradation —a much-repeated phrase, but one which nonetheless bears repeating. The right to protection and care, already affirmed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, should also be seen as protection from environmental degradation, which affects every aspect of children's well-being. This concept needs to be included in the statement of principles that will be made in Rio, to be called the Earth Charter or the Rio Declaration.

Vulnerability, however, is certainly not the only aspect of the link between children and the environment, nor should children be seen merely as passive victims. For it is they who in the next century will be responsible for looking after the earth. It is, therefore, only fair that their concerns be addressed in any action the international community takes now to deal with environmental degradation.

Getting down to basics

One of the greatest challenges of the UNCED meeting will be to reconcile the perspectives of the industrialized North and the underdeveloped South, whose differences are clear.

About four fifths of the world's people live in developing countries, with children making up almost half the population in many cases. Nearly one fourth of humanity lives in absolute poverty in the South, unable to fulfil their most basic needs for food, shelter and clothing. Hunger, malnutrition, dirty water and preventable diseases kill 40,000 children every day. For the majority of people in the South, meeting survival needs is an overriding priority and their view of the environment is a very basic one.

In contrast, the affluent in the North (and in the South) no longer worry about fulfilling basic survival needs. For them, the environment has lost its immediacy, so they see it in terms of saving the rain forests, stemming ozone depletion, acid rain and greenhouse gases, and buying 'environmentally friendly' consumer goods. Forests are seen as carbon sinks and population issues only as a strain on the earth's resources.

Ironically, many of the passionate

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CONTINENT'S STRENGTHS TO BE A FOCUS

Donor conference on African Child set for year-end

By Patricia Lone

Concerned about the continuing crisis in Africa, and the widening gap between the continent's many reform efforts and the external resources required for their success, UNICEF will be supporting a range of actions and strategies to alleviate the crisis and narrow the resource gap.

The most prominent will be support for a donors' conference on the African Child called for by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and scheduled for the end of the year. It promises to provide an opportunity for Africa to show the progress it has made in child survival and development efforts as well as its plans to meet Summit goals, as a way of eliciting increased donor support.

Buttressing this approach is a subdued but unmistakable optimism that grows out of the lessons learned over the past 10 years and is rooted in the new and productive resolve Africa has shown in tackling its problems, in the wave of democratization that is sweeping the continent and in the growing consensus that only human-centred development can spur and support the changes needed in Africa.

The past decade has offered Africa bitter but useful insights into the value of strategies designed to help it cope. For years, many African countries struggled to implement structural economic changes in order to qualify for continued loans from international funding agencies, eliminating jobs and subsidies on staples, reducing salaries and opening their economies to competition from imports. By the end of the decade, however, it was evident that structural adjustment programmes offered an important but only a partial remedy to the problems plaguing Africa.

For despite following such pro-

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Committee on Child Rights proposes guidelines for government policies

By Dan Jacobs

The euphoria felt when the first binding international instrument to protect children's rights entered into force in September 1990 has levelled off these days as organizations, governments and individuals take long, hard looks at how they can translate the Convention into better lives for children.

But while myriad practical and down-to-earth questions and concerns need to be addressed at various levels and stages, some clear guiding light has emerged from the first session of the 10-member Committee on the Rights of the Child, which met in Geneva last October. Probably most illuminating are the guidelines the Committee formulated for the reports governments have to submit to the Committee on their efforts to comply with the Convention.

The reporting process is one of the keys to the Committee's ability to monitor what the more than 100 governments that have ratified the Convention are doing to implement children's rights. Countries are expected to submit reports to the Committee two years after ratification, and following that every five years. Members of the Committee

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UNICEF/4919C/91/Sonny Yahao

After a rooming-in policy, enabling mothers to breastfeed their infants on demand, was introduced in one hospital in the Philippines, the incidence of neonatal deaths due to infection dropped by 95 per cent.

Baby-friendly hospital initiative takes off

By Maggie Murray-Lee

"Every country should have at least one baby-friendly hospital by the end of 1992", UNICEF Executive Director James P. Grant told the UNICEF Representatives of the 12 countries chosen to lead the baby-friendly hospital initiative at a meeting in New York in October.

So far, progress has been impressive, with each of the 12 lead countries (Bolivia, Brazil, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Gabon, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, Turkey) on schedule in designating at least one baby-friendly hospital in their country by the end of 1991.

The baby-friendly hospital initiative, a "global effort" involving 160 countries (95 of them in the developing world), was launched in June 1991 by WHO and UNICEF. To earn the classification, a hospital must comply with the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding developed by the two organizations *(see box on page 4)*.

The general goal is to reverse a trend of the last few decades, when bottle-feeding has increased throughout the world, and breastfeeding — especially exclusive breastfeeding— has declined. A major concern has been the increasing reliance of hospitals on the infant formula provided to them for free or at low subsidized rates by infant food manufacturers.

The baby-friendly hospital initiative does not stop at the hospital, however. The challenge in many developing countries, where few babies are born in hospital or where their stay is brief, is to extend the principles of breastfeeding throughout the primary health care system, and to encourage communities and villages to support breastfeeding mothers.

In many industrialized countries, the challenge will be to make it possible for mothers to breastfeed, especially working mothers, who for economic reasons are forced to resume work rapidly after childbirth.

The initiative is an outgrowth of years of related work, starting with the first meeting on infant and young child feeding organized by WHO and UNICEF in 1979, when negotiations began with infant formula manufacturers. In 1981, the World Health Assembly adopted the International

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African efforts to counter crisis generate optimism

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grammes, Africa's debt more than doubled in the last decade, to US$280 billion, equivalent to 90 per cent of its gross national product. To service this debt, Africa paid US$25 billion in 1990, consuming a third of its export earnings and representing more than what is spent in Africa on health and education combined. In addition, the continent suffered severely from the plummeting prices of the commodities that comprise almost 80 per cent of its exports, losing US$50 billion between 1986 and 1990 alone, according to the comprehensive report on the African economy the UN Secretary-General presented in September.

Early in the decade, when the continent's major priority, according to many international institutions, was the need to pay its debt by increasing the value of its exports and reducing its trade and budget deficits, important issues of how its people, particularly women and children, were faring were obscured.

When it became obvious that they hadn't fared well, one of the most important, if painful, lessons of the 1980s was learned: the human cost of structural adjustment must be kept in clear view, especially since declines in skills, education and health impeded the very economic recovery that adjustment was designed to foster.

Another lesson was that Africa is too diverse and the issues too complex for there to be one view of what should happen there, said Richard Jolly, UNICEF Deputy Executive Director, adding that there's a vital need for a stronger UN voice to be heard on the need for human-centred development.

For UNICEF, the lesson reaffirmed the legitimacy and common sense of its mandate. "Maintaining a critical awareness of the situation of children" is a way of keeping the macroeconomic problems, and proposed solutions, in perspective, according to Marta Maurás, Chief of the Africa Section. "If governments and partners have first call for children as an aspiration and ideal and commitment, then there is no way they can escape a re-examination of their priorities." For such a re-examination, good analysis and good data are essential, says Ms. Maurás.

It was such data on children's health and welfare that helped the world understand that rising illness and malnutrition were much more serious indicators of a troubled economy than red ink. Now data collection and analysis need to be streamlined and improved, if initiatives to further human development are to attract the resources they need to succeed.

"For too long, we haven't had the right tools to analyse the returns, but investments in primary education, for example, yield higher economic returns than anything else", emphasized Denis Caillaux, Deputy Director of the Programme Funding Office at UNICEF.

What UNICEF also needs to know and stress, Mr. Caillaux pointed out, are the inherent strengths of Africa on which it can build. "Strengths are as important to know as the incidence of measles and what a country's infant mortality rate is. For instance, Africa's extended family structure could be a starting point for poverty alleviation strategies."

A sharper focus on successes achieved is also needed because good ideas and well-thought-out trial programmes that stress both the human and the positive can interest donors, Mr. Caillaux said. "Many donors now realize that it's more important to ensure that children don't die from measles than to have 500 miles of highways. But we need a book of successes showing what is being done."

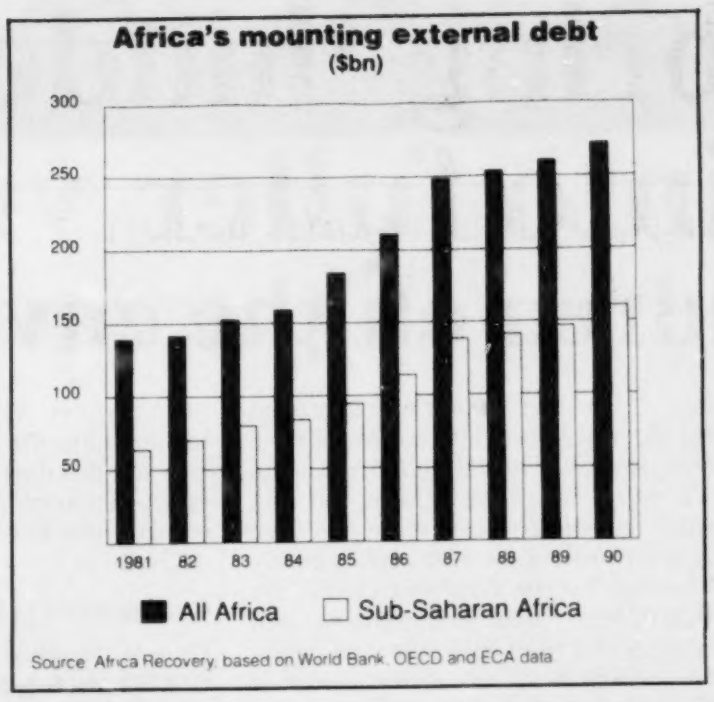
The strategies of keeping both children and successful ventures in the world's eyes will converge towards the end of this year, when nations will gather at the OAU donors' conference on the African Child. The national programmes of action developed by African countries to meet Summit goals will be the centrepiece of the conference, setting out specific and doable objectives, time frames and budgets.

While donor countries, international aid agencies and non-governmental organizations have all learned from Africa's recent struggles, it's Africa itself that has learned the most. Waiting neither for desperately needed debt relief nor for new aid pledges, millions of people across the world's most impoverished continent have set up their own community health centres, reforested their villages, dug wells and continued to care for their families. And political pluralism, already introduced in many nations as a result of popular pressure, was further legitimized by Nigeria's President Ibrahim Babangida's strong plea for democratic government in Africa when he assumed the chairmanship of the OAU last June. Martin Mogwanja, Deputy Chief of the Africa Section at UNICEF, feels that if such efforts received economic support from the international community at this time, with cold war rivalries finished, then dramatic, positive change in Africa would be more possible.

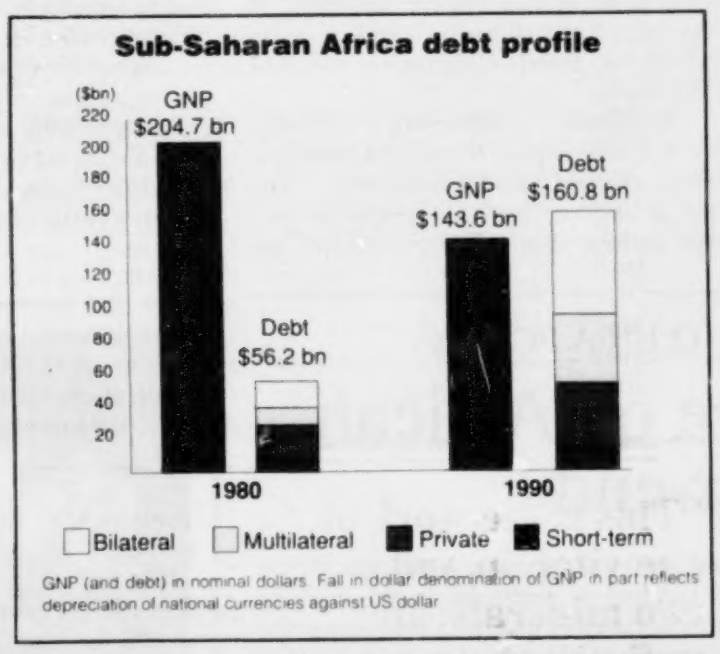
But much remains to be done to put the continent's ravaged economies on sound, people-centred foundations, not least the restructuring of priorities that allocate two and a half times as much to the military as to health services in sub-Saharan Africa. Among the priorities the UN Economic Commission for Africa describes as vital for the continent are food self-sufficiency and the fundamentals of safe water, primary health care, education and affordable transport for all people.

Beyond those is the need to ensure long-term, sustainable development, creating industries that can meet Africa's needs, while removing intra-African trade barriers and eventually engendering an African Economic Community. The commitment is evident, and there is every prospect of success if the needed external resources can be mobilized.

Patricia Lone is the Editor of **First Call for Children.**



Source: Africa Recovery, based on World Bank, OECD and ECA data



GNP (and debt) in nominal dollars. Fall in dollar denomination of GNP in part reflects depreciation of national currencies against US dollar

Source: UN Africa Recovery

Oxfam reviews ground lost in war on world poverty

By Allan Thompson

In Zambia, child deaths caused by malnutrition more than doubled in the decade of the '80s. In most of Africa and much of Latin America, average incomes fell by 10 to 25 per cent over the past decade. For Oxfam, which came into existence nearly 50 years ago trying to relieve famine in Nazi-occupied Greece during the Allied blockade of Europe, facts like these are disturbing evidence of the 'lost decade' of the '80s.

The cause has much to do with plummeting commodity prices, according to a comprehensive report Oxfam released which details the widening gap between North and South.

By April 1991, commodity prices had fallen to their lowest point ever in real terms, a deterioration in the terms of trade that has cost developing countries an estimated £33.3 billion a year. Added to the £34.3 billion paid out in interest on debts last year, the new burden represents more than twice the £28.3 billion which developing countries receive in aid every year.

According to Oxfam, restrictive trade practices, which the industrialized countries employ to block the developing world's manufactured goods from entering their markets, are also responsible for the growing impoverishment in the developing world. Aid to better-off countries is another policy that Oxfam assails, along with tied aid, which is disbursed on the condition that it be spent on goods from the donor country. And the debt of developing countries is an enormous burden, with debt payments exceeding the earning capacities of countries in most cases in the 1980s.

The solution Oxfam proposes is for rich countries to increase their aid budgets to 0.7 per cent of their gross national products (GNP), from an average now of only 0.33 per cent.

Oxfam also points to the root causes in the developing world itself of its problems, including frequently a lack of democracy and multiple military conflicts that deepen poverty. Annual military spending in developing countries has shot up by an average of 7.5 per cent over the past 25 years, according to the report.

Despite Oxfam's gloomy assessment of conditions in the developing world, the organization's Overseas Director David Bryer said the world had never seemed so ready and so able to tackle the problem of poverty, adding, "It would be sad if the fall of the Berlin Wall led only to a slight enlargement of the Rich Man's Club."

Allan Thompson works with Gemini News Service.

UNICEF/4813/91/Ruby Mera

Viking ship *Gaia* sails for Rio with children's proclamation on board.

On course for Earth Summit

New York harbour and Coast Guard craft sounded their horns and water sprayed high in the air from a fireboat as the Viking ship *Gaia* hoisted a banner bearing the UNICEF logo and the message: "Keep the Promise — for a better world for all children."

The *Gaia* arrived in New York on the way to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio, following the route from Norway that Leif Eriksson is believed to have taken 1,000 years ago. The *Gaia* set sail for Rio in early October, carrying on board a proclamation that had been presented at a waterside ceremony at UN Headquarters by eight children representing a variety of nationalities. The proclamation is to be delivered to UNCED by the *Gaia's* Captain, Ragnar Thorseth. In it, the children express concern for their future and hope that children's issues will be kept high on the UNCED agenda.

Italian mayors sign on for global child alliance

By Donata Lodi and June Kunugi

It seems there isn't a mayor in Italy today who doesn't want to be an advocate for children. And they went on record saying just that in Rome on 30 September 1991, when over 300 mayors enthusiastically reaffirmed their defence of children's rights, first pledged on 2 September 1990, and proposed that mayors and local authorities form a global alliance to protect and implement children's rights.

The 'Mayors for Children' meeting in Rome was organized by the Italian Committee for UNICEF and the Division of Public Affairs at UNICEF headquarters in New York as a prelude to the International Colloquium of Mayors, to be held in Dakar, Senegal, from 8 to 10 January. The Dakar Colloquium will launch the global initiative of mayors as defenders of children. In preparation, 48 Senegalese mayors are expected to become defenders of children and establish urban initiatives.

Attending the Rome meeting along with the Italian mayors were UNICEF Executive Director James P. Grant; UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Audrey Hepburn; Mayor of Dakar Mamadou Diop; actress Giulietta Masina, Ambassador of the Italian Committee for UNICEF; representatives of nine international municipal organizations and of a number of UNICEF National Committees, and mayors of other European cities.

Declaration adopted

The official Declaration adopted at the Rome meeting will constitute the framework for discussion at the upcoming Dakar Colloquium. Among other points, it asks for sufficient budgets at the municipal level to promote the survival, protection and development of children; for the creation of evaluation systems in line with the Summit Plan of Action; and for the commitment of municipal hospitals and health services to meeting the needs of children.

As national boundaries continue to blur and shift and national capacities are strained, cities are assuming ever greater responsibility and authority in helping their citizens. Not least among the new challenges for municipal leaders is the way they represent children.

"Each mayor, each municipality exists to respond to the needs of the community they represent", said Italian Committee President Arnoldo Farina. "Children are a part of that community, yet do not vote and do not have a voice. We ask mayors and the political forces of all municipalities to provide a voice to children, to clearly acknowledge their presence, not only to improve services to them, but to overcome obstacles in the way of public participation in the defence of children's rights."

The day after the Rome Declaration was adopted by acclamation, Mayor Diop of Dakar and local authorities of L'Aquila, capital of the Italian region of Abruzzo, displayed the power of municipalities by signing a 'twinning' agreement of cooperation and common initiatives on behalf of children. This accord was cemented by a message written by the youth of Abruzzo to their peers in Dakar. They said, "We must see ourselves as citizens of the same country, so that everybody feels equal in diversity and recognizes democratic freedom without which there will be no future, neither for us, nor for the entire world."

Donata Lodi is an Information Officer with the Italian Committee for UNICEF. June Kunugi is a consultant with UNICEF New York.

Agencies act to bring 'hidden hunger' into fuller view

By John Usher

Three days after WHO Director-General Hiroshi Nakajima and UNICEF Executive Director James P. Grant certified to the UN Secretary-General the achievement of 80 per cent immunization coverage of children worldwide against six deadly diseases, the two agency heads went to Montreal for a conference designed to jump-start a global effort to eliminate micronutrient deficiency. Dietary shortages of vitamin A, iron and iodine — a widespread form of malnutrition called 'hidden hunger'— disable, blind and kill hundreds of millions of people, most of them children *(see box)*.

The Montreal conference (October 10-12), with the optimistic title 'Ending Hidden Hunger', attracted about 300 senior officials from health, agriculture, industry and planning ministries, together with technical specialists from 50 countries.

In addition to WHO and UNICEF, its co-sponsors included the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), FAO, UNDP and the World Bank. The micronutrient conference was organized and coordinated by the Task Force on Child Survival and Development. Keynote speakers all called for action to alleviate and eventually eliminate avoidable suffering, pain and death.

"This is the story of one vitamin and two minerals, an unfinished story of a needless human tragedy being enacted in large parts of the developing world."

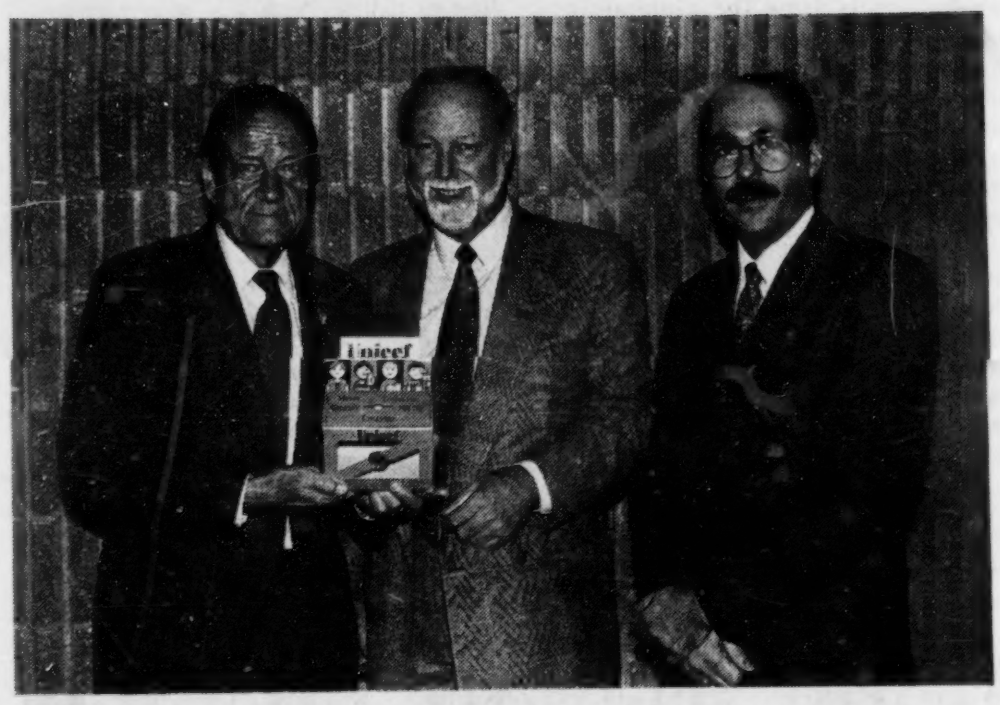
Just like the vaccines that combat diphtheria, measles, whooping cough, tetanus, polio and tuberculosis, the antidotes to micronutrient deficiencies are known, available and cheap.

"This is the story of one vitamin and two minerals, an unfinished story of a needless human tragedy being enacted in large parts of the developing world", said Dr. Vulimiri Ramalingaswami, Chairman of the Task Force on Health Research for Development.

"The young, the poor and the female in some cultures are the worst affected", he said, "but micronutrient malnutrition is a pervasive phenomenon and its consequences are felt at all stages of the human life cycle, from the moment the fertilized ovum starts upon its perilous journey in the darkness of the mother's womb."

Dr. Nakajima, who said the conference was called "to end once and for all" micronutrient deficiencies, reminded delegates that the 1990 World Summit for Children endorsed and reinforced micronutrient goals:

— the virtual elimination of iodine deficiency disorders;
— the virtual elimination of vitamin A deficiency and its consequences, including blindness;
— reduction by one third of the 1990 levels of iron deficiency anaemia in women.



An international conference on micronutrient deficiencies attracted health, agriculture and planning officials last year in Montreal. Mr. James P. Grant, UNICEF Executive Director (left), pictured with Mr. Robert Pletsch (centre), President of the Canadian UNICEF Committee, and René Pilon, Executive Director of the Quebec Committee, told the meeting that the remedies to 'hidden hunger' are known, available and cheap.

"The challenge of reaching these goals is clearly enormous, but it can be achieved", he said. The conference gave delegates "a precious opportunity to gather our collective strength, to visualize our goals, to comprehend the urgent action that we must undertake", Dr. Nakajima added.

The tools are in the workshop

Mr. Grant told the conference that what made efforts against micronutrient malnutrition so "eminently doable" was that nothing new has to be invented.

"The tools we need are already in the workshop", he said. "Effective and low-cost remedies have existed for many years. Where they are applied, the results are truly extraordinary. Two vitamin A capsules, costing four US cents, can stave off deficiencies in an individual for a year. The iron pills needed for the recommended three- to four-month treatment period cost a quarter of a US dollar. Iodization of salt works out to about five US cents per person per year."

Mr. Grant said other costs associated with training and distribution, and establishing local production capabilities, could be kept quite low, depending on "the extent that the fight against micronutrient deficiencies is integrated into other programmes."

Referring to the global immunization achievements, which he attributed to the pioneering efforts of many of the conference participants, Mr. Grant said, "The gratification of having made a difference, of accomplishing what many thought impossible, should now inform and energize us."

Immunization connection

Dr. Ramalingaswami directly linked the micronutrient goals with the UCI achievements, saying immunization programmes "offer a window of opportunity for the delivery of services under the micronutrient initiative.

"Good health services facilitate immunization, and immunization services strengthen the health infrastructure, facilitate decentralization and improve management capabilities, including the setting up of surveillance systems", Dr. Ramalingaswami said. "The micronutrient initiative cannot but benefit from these assets."

In his closing remarks to the conference, Dr. William Foege, Executive Director of the Task Force for Child Survival and Development, mused over micronutrient malnutrition as the 'hidden hunger'.

"I grew up with the saying that something has to be seen to be believed", he said. "But I think some things have to be believed to be seen."

John Usher is the Chief of the Media Relations Section in the Division of Information, UNICEF New York.

MACRO HAVOC FROM MICRONUTRIENT DEFICIENCIES

Vitamin A, iron and iodine are labelled 'micronutrients' because of the minute amounts needed in the body for good health. Deficiencies of them, however, wreak 'macro' havoc, mainly among the world's poor.

Without dietary iodine, children grow up stunted, apathetic, mentally retarded. Lack of iodine in pregnant women can cause miscarriage. Some 1 billion people in 95 countries lack iodine in their diets, primarily because it has been washed from the soil in the mountainous or flood-prone regions where they live in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Consequently, between 200 million and 300 million people have goitre and 20 million suffer mental retardation, including 6 million cretins.

Iron deficiency anaemia, the world's most prevalent nutritional disorder, threatens the lives and health of some 350 million women and children. The effects include impaired child development and learning ability, diminished work capacity and reduced resistance to disease.

Vitamin A deficiency is the leading cause of blindness in children under five years and a major cause of child death. More than 350,000 children go blind each year — 60 per cent of them die within a year. Up to 40 million children under five suffer some degree of deficiency.

Breastfeeding: a historical perspective

By James R. Himes

The history of Spedale degli Innocenti in Florence, probably the world's oldest continuously operating foundling hospital for abandoned and orphaned children, provides thought-provoking challenges for those concerned with contemporary issues of child survival and development. Its history throws particular light on the important protection breastfeeding affords.

Disease, famines and wars devastated populations in the 14th century, with half the people of Florence perishing in the plagues of the 1340s. Infant mortality, extremely high in the general population, was even higher within foundling homes for a number of reasons, including the weak condition of many infants upon admission and the rapid spread of contagious diseases in the children's crowded quarters.

However, some institutions had practices much more conducive to child survival and healthy development than others facing similarly difficult conditions. And a number of foundling homes did far better during certain periods of their history than at others — at least partly because of their policies and practices.

The policies that saved children's lives at the Spedale degli Innocenti were a careful system of wet-nursing and the commitment to ensuring foster care rather than institutional care, whenever possible, for the infants in their charge. According to a history of the institution during the period 1410-1536 by Philip Gavitt *(see 'Recent Books' below)*, there was a resident staff of wet-nurses who fed abandoned infants when they first arrived. The infants were sent to wet-nurses in the countryside, on average from 6 to 12 days after admission, where they stayed until they were weaned, generally between the ages of 18 and 24 months. When they returned to the hospital, it was often for a brief time, until they were assigned to foster-parents.

As a result of these policies, infant mortality at Innocenti was substantially lower in the 15th century than it was three centuries later. It was also lower than infant mortality in, for example, what has been described as 'one of the premier foundling homes in Germany' at the end of the 19th century, where an infant mortality rate of 71.5 per cent of all admissions was reported. And it was lower than in some foundling hospitals in the United States in the early 20th century, where the upper end of the range reached at least 75 per cent, according to Gavitt.

Similarly, in the early decades of the 19th century the administrators and authorities of Innocenti reverted to a stress on breastfeeding to reduce the high infant mortality rates that the home had experienced during the 18th century. Pier Paolo Viazzo, Director of Historical Research at the Istituto degli Innocenti, has described how the number of wet-nurses was increased and infants were entrusted to a wet-nurse living in her own home. "This emphasis on breastfeeding was a major factor behind the gradual but very substantial decline of infant mortality in foundling homes which took place in the course of the 19th century", writes Viazzo in a recent publication.

At a time when UNICEF and the World Health Organization seek to promote the idea of 'baby-friendly hospitals', these lessons from history are well worth knowing.

James Himes is the Director of the UNICEF International Child Development Centre.

RECENT BOOKS: A recent joint publication of the UNICEF International Child Development Centre and Istituto degli Innocenti provides a fascinating account of breastfeeding and wet-nursing practices during more than 400 years of European experience: *Historical Perspectives on Breastfeeding: Two essays by Sara F. Matthews Grieco and Carlo A. Corsini.* The book by Philip Gavitt is entitled *Charity and Children in Renaissance Florence* (The University of Michigan Press, 1990).

Baby-friendly hospital initiative takes off

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Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes to regulate the advertising and promotional techniques used to sell infant formulas. Then in the early 1980s, breastfeeding was promoted as part of the UNICEF GOBI strategy (Growth monitoring, Oral rehydration, Breastfeeding, Immunization). In 1990, the Innocenti Declaration, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the World Summit Declaration all called attention to the importance of breastfeeding.

The initiative took clearer shape after a meeting in June 1991, when infant formula manufacturers agreed to "cooperate actively to achieve the goal of ending the free and low-cost distribution of breastmilk substitutes to hospitals and maternity centres in developing countries by the end of 1992."

Events there moved rapidly, with the heads of WHO and UNICEF sending a joint letter to heads of State or Government, calling for action in support of the baby-friendly hospital initiative. Following this action, the President of the Infant Formula Manufacturers' Association, Dr. G.P. Borasio, addressed a letter to the Ministers of Health of the 12 lead countries, asking for their support in introducing government regulations on the distribution of infant formula in their particular countries.

UNICEF and WHO are also working closely with NGOs and non-profit professional organizations, like Wellstart, a private non-profit organization that trains health-care workers in lactation management. In February last year, major international organizations set up the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA), with the common goal to "protect, promote and support breastfeeding".

"The initiative has caught on — the best evidence is the large harvest of baby-friendly hospitals yielded by the 12 lead countries at the end of 1991."

To ensure that 'baby-friendly' means the same thing everywhere, a Global Commission, composed of prominent international professionals, was established in December 1991 to adopt and endorse strict guidelines for the designation of baby-friendly hospitals and criteria for an award system. A team of appraisers will also be constituted to work with national authorities on implementation and the training of government and hospital staff.

In Kenya, which has been baby-friendly for several years, most maternity institutions have already halted the supply of milk formula. Last October, the Minister of Health identified Pumwani Hospital and Kenyatta National Hospital as baby-friendly because they had been practicing the Ten Steps for at least five years.

At a meeting chaired by President Carlos Salinas de Gortari last November, the Mexican Council of Infant Food Manufacturers publicly announced their decision to suspend the distribution of free and low-cost supplies of infant formula to public and private health-care facilities in Mexico.

In Bangladesh, the Dhaka Declaration, committing the Government to enact legislation on the control of breastmilk substitutes, was signed by several ministers at the country's first national conference on breastfeeding, held in November 1991.

A scientific orientation meeting on the baby-friendly hospital initiative was held in Bangkok last November, which laid the foundations for a national plan of action.

Several National Committees are also actively engaged in baby-friendly activities. At the press conference for *The State of the World's Children 1992* report at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, the Canadian Committee for UNICEF seized the opportunity to launch the baby-friendly hospital initiative in Canada.

Earlier in 1991, the UK Committee was instrumental in lobbying British ministers for changes in an internal market directive of the European Commission on infant formula and follow-on formula. The UK Committee also organized a letter to the European Commissioner from the Directors of 11 European Committees. This action, the Committee advises, urgently needs to be repeated, since the European Commission is currently preparing a directive on infant and follow-on formula for export.

Richard Reid, Director of the Division of Public Affairs and coordinator of the baby-friendly hospital initiative at UNICEF headquarters, is encouraged by progress so far. "From all we can see now, indications are that the tally of hospitals reaching the baby-friendly qualification line will be much higher than our earlier expectations," he said. "The initiative has caught on — the best evidence of that is the large harvest of baby-friendly hospitals yielded by the 12 lead countries at the end of 1991. From here on, the growth could be exponential as we move into the broadening of the challenge to all the countries of the world."

Maggie Murray-Lee is Global Communications Officer, Division of Information in UNICEF New York.

UNICEF/4925Z/Betty Press

Among the health benefits breastfed infants receive is improved resistance to infection.

Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding

Every facility providing maternity services and care for newborn infants should:

1. Have a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all health care staff.
2. Train all health care staff in skills necessary to implement this policy.
3. Inform all pregnant women about the benefits and management of breastfeeding.
4. Help mothers initiate breastfeeding within a half-hour of birth.
5. Show mothers how to breastfeed, and how to maintain lactation even if they should be separated from their infants.
6. Give newborn infants no food or drink other than breastmilk, unless medically indicated.
7. Practice rooming-in — allow mothers and infants to remain together — 24 hours a day.
8. Encourage breastfeeding on demand.
9. Give no artificial teats or pacifiers (also called dummies or soothers) to breastfeeding infants.
10. Foster the establishment of breastfeeding support groups and refer mothers to them on discharge from the hospital or clinic.

India's water miracle

Unprecedented urban industrial growth and an increase in agricultural and commercial demand combined with drought in the 1980s to produce a water crisis in India. Mobilizing swiftly, the Government installed nearly 200,000 pumps a year between 1986 and 1989, the worst of the drought years, and 100,000 a year until the campaign ended in 1991. The effort, a 'watershed' in the struggle to ensure people's access to safe water, provides valuable lessons in social mobilization and the application of appropriate technology, as the world struggles to protect and manage its most vital resource.
GOURISANKAR GHOSH, Special Assistant to the Director of the UNICEF Programme Division, was Director of the National Drinking Water Mission in India and Joint Secretary in the Department of Rural Development during the water campaign. Here he describes how India brought safe water to almost all its people ... and the concerns that remain.

One third of India is arid or plagued with water problems virtually all the time. Yet India is one of the world's richest countries in water resources. The average annual precipitation in India is twice the average precipitation of Asia and higher than every other continent in the world except South America.

The situation we faced in the 1980s was drought compounded by problems in water demand and supply management. In urban areas, there was tremendous industrial and population growth that put stress on urban water supply schemes, with particular dependence on groundwater, without any control on extraction.

In rural areas, the problems were even greater. New industrial centres were using groundwater extensively and discharging effluents, thus rendering downstream areas dry or polluted.

By mid-decade, drought was recurring, raising the possibility of mass migration of humans and cattle. And the level of water coverage was evaluated at only 50 per cent in 1985 — which was, ironically, the mid-point of the International Water Decade. Policy makers were forced to look for a long-term programme to meet the crisis as well as to make progress towards the Water Decade goals.

There were thousands of mobilization and participation activities. Social communication units were incorporated in public health engineering departments.

Strategic breakthroughs

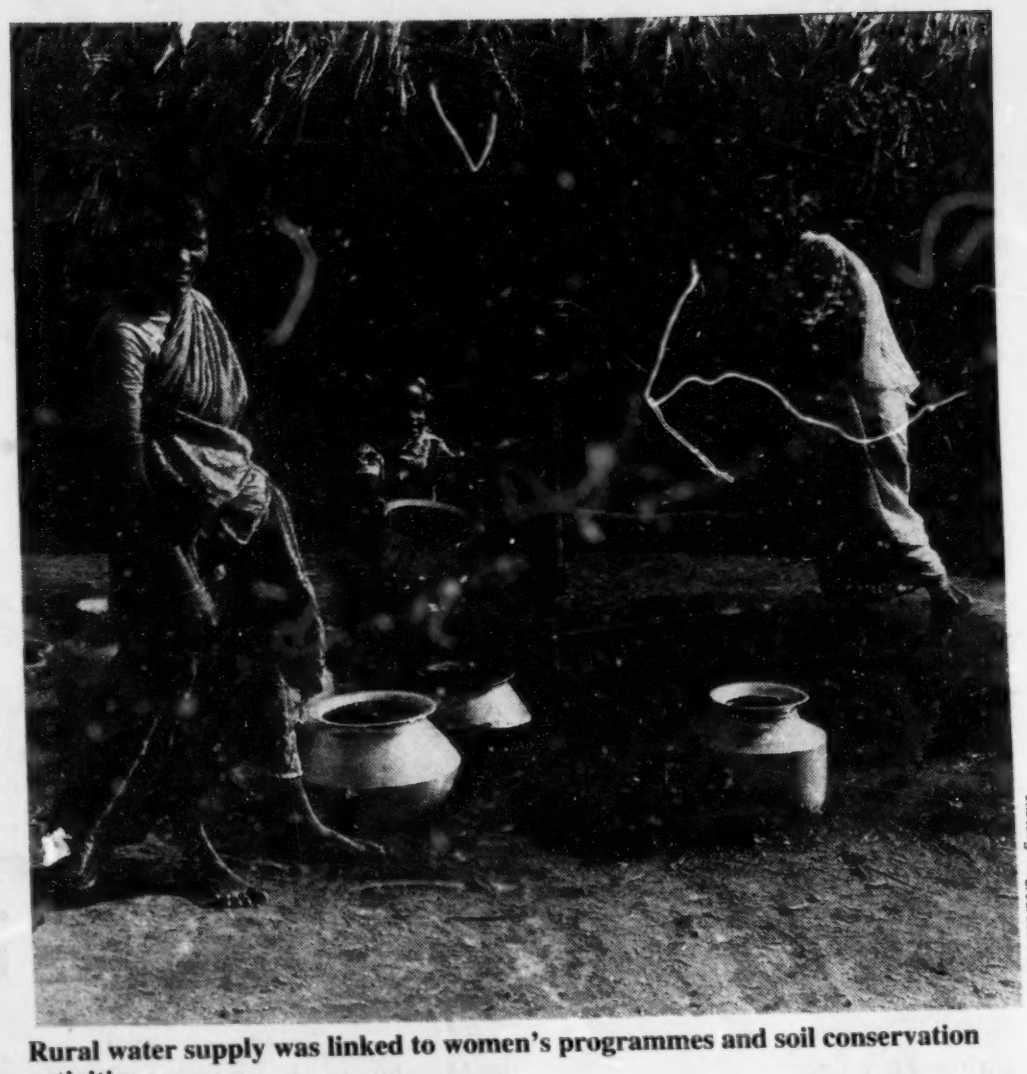
Two policies were crucial in meeting the challenges the country faced regarding water. One was the Cabinet's decision to shift rural water supply and sanitation from the Ministry of Works and Housing to the Department of Rural Development in the Ministry of Agriculture. This shift changed the entire culture of the issue. Water supply would no longer have an engineering focus as it did in the approach by the urban-oriented Ministry of Works and Housing. Instead, it assumed a strong community orientation and became part of the integrated activities of rural development, such as women's programmes and soil conservation activities.

The other breakthrough was the launching of five technology missions by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in March 1986 to ensure progress through appropriate technology. The five areas of concentration were rural drinking water supply, universal immunization, adult literacy, oil seed production and telecommunications. The approach was to pool all the technological and managerial resources of all concerned departments and to meet goals within a specific time and cost framework.

Tasks and targets

The task with which the Water Mission was charged was by 1990 to cover 162,000 problem villages, identified as such on the basis of a survey of approximately 600,000 villages, and also to maintain the supply of water even in times of drought. The budget available — about US$600 million per year — was far short of the amount estimated as needed.

Overall, the strategies were to reduce the cost, identify and apply the most appropriate technology available in the country, programme and monitor targets within time milestones, and develop user-friendly technology where needed.



UNICEF/058/83/Sean Sprague

Rural water supply was linked to women's programmes and soil conservation activities.

Community mobilization, community participation

The programme was highly decentralized, a plan of action developed at the grass-roots level. It was a model mixture of top-down and bottom-up planning and programme execution.

A very important factor was a strong emphasis on making information widely available to the public. As a result, people's aspirations rose and created automatic pressure on the delivery system. In Gujarat, for example, the entire government machinery including the Chief Minister responded to questions in a public meeting organized by one voluntary organization.

The role played by UNICEF was not only unique but is a model on its own. UNICEF provided drilling rigs and equipment and extensive technological and scientific help. But perhaps its greatest contribution, through workshops, field testing materials and other projects, was to the mission's communication strategies, which carried the day.

There were, quite literally, thousands of mobilization and participation activities. Folk artists performed in skits, dramas and plays and sang songs about personal hygiene habits and the eradication of dracunculiasis during weekly markets and in schools. Children participated in slogan and poster contests on water conservation, the environment and health topics. Print, television and radio media also were fully used. And political support came from the Prime Minister himself, who gave the highest priority to issues related to children, women, water, sanitation, immunization, health and literacy. In addition, UNICEF used its influence to see that social communication units were incorporated in public health engineering departments in all states of the country. All this created unprecedented levels of enthusiasm.

A flood of achievements

During the period 1986-1991 the Water Mission provided water to nearly 250,000 villages, and the water supply in another 100,000 villages was rejuvenated. Currently in India there are 10 million water pumps installed by both the private and public sector, 85 per cent of them working.

Water quality was improved along with water supply. Some 5,000 iron removal systems were installed and 100 fluoride removal units. Research and development projects were also undertaken, including development of a mobile water testing laboratory and research into chemicals to control dracunculiasis and to reduce evaporation of water from surface reservoirs.

A slogan of the mission was 'Not to allow a drop of water to flow to the sea'. An outstanding example of the mission's success occurred in Jhabua in Madhya Pradesh, where the area around 200 dams turned green through rejuvenation efforts, and a random survey found that nearly 95 per cent of the India Mark II handpumps were in working order.

To keep the well — and the world — from running dry

India's success in containing the threat it faced in the 1980s is only a partial victory. Problems, of course, remain.

The gap between the supply of water and the demand for it will widen in India, particularly if water used for irrigation isn't controlled, properly priced or metered. As of today, there is no effective legislation in any Indian state regulating the extraction of this precious resource. As long as this question remains unresolved, small farmers will suffer.

Industrial pollution is another pressing issue. And certainly the issues of land use and control of salinity in coastal and desert areas, affecting populations in those fragile ecozones, remain unsolved. What needs to emerge from the success of the Water Mission is a rethinking of regional plans. The industry-oriented growth models in developing countries are not only likely to have adverse effects on future generations, but also may not be cost effective.

India's programme shows that a total water-management approach serves not only to solve the problem of drinking water but also to rejuvenate the economy of the area. Agriculture can identify crops requiring less water; industries can either use recycled water or recycle water themselves and can assume responsibility for treating any effluent.

Engineering techniques alone can't solve water problems. Although politically unpopular, environmental issues must be addressed in tackling the basic issues of growth in developing countries and particularly in vulnerable ecozones. No amount of technology or money will be able to save the situation if we do not address these issues now, in this decade.

Convention commentary to be published mid-1992

A commentary on the Convention on the Rights of the Child will be published in mid-1992 by UNICEF and the UN Centre for Human Rights. The commentary, although not an official document, will be an invaluable guide to the Convention's provisions, containing the drafting history, the relevant provisions of other international treaties and declarations, and general and specific observations.

Professor Philip Alston, Professor of Law at the Australian National University, is preparing the commentary, supervised by an editorial advisory board. The board members are Nigel Cantwell from Defense for Children International; Virginia Leary, Professor of Law at the State University of New York; Ahmed Fathallah, Egyptian diplomat; Adam Lopatka, former chairman of the working group that drafted the Convention; Vitit Muntarbhorn, Professor of Law in Bangkok and UN Special Rapporteur; John Pace, of the UN Centre for Human Rights; Marta dos Santos Pais, rapporteur of the Committee on the Rights of the Child; Fausto Pocar, Chairman of the Human Rights Committee; Joaquin Ruiz-Gimenez, Philosophy of Law Professor and former Spanish Ombudsman; Victor Soler-Sala, UNICEF Representative in Beijing; and Danilo Turk, former Chairman of the UN Human Rights Subcommission.

Training on Convention ready soon

Now that more than 100 countries have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, more and more often questions arise about how it can best be used on behalf of children and the ways in which it will affect UNICEF's work.

Many of the answers will be found in a training package on the Convention that should be ready early this year. The package is also expected to lend itself to adaptation for use by National Committees for UNICEF.

Among its contents will be a video — produced in conjunction with the UN in Geneva — and case-studies dealing with areas of the Convention that seem to raise the most questions, such as the challenge of involving young children in their own rights.

Alan Silverman of the UNICEF Training Section, which is involved in producing the training package, cited the example of strategies being used in Sweden: "They have put together kits for preschool children so they can understand what the right to education means and the right to a healthy environment. Games are another way to reach young children with these ideas."

One message that the kit will convey clearly is that UNICEF is not responsible for enforcing the Convention but is to work with governments and other partners to carry out the Convention's terms. The package offers insights into just how that can be accomplished, including an examination of the specific roles and responsibilities of governments. It also explains the role of NGOs and of such groups and individuals as parliamentarians, religious leaders and the media, which together with UNICEF can create a strong, complementary network that acts on behalf of children.

The tools for collaborating with governments are already largely in place. As Alan Silverman pointed out, "Most of what UNICEF does contributes to the Convention already. The World Summit goals, for example, complement the Convention. Similarly, UNICEF doesn't have to create new sectoral programmes, but the Convention can be used to support existing programmes. We intend to explain how situation analyses, for example, can be broadened to encompass and report on child rights. It is what we have been doing all along in a new legal context."

MILESTONES ON CHILD RIGHTS

The International Labour Organisation traces here some of the legal steps the world has taken to protect children's rights over the years.

1833 The United Kingdom prohibits work for children under the age of 9, sets hours of work for older children

1836 Massachusetts adopts first United States child labour reform law

1839 Prussia passes law regulating child labour

1841 First French legislation on work by children

1842 United Kingdom Parliament forbids work in mines by children under the age of 13

1870 Compulsory full-time schooling introduced in the United Kingdom

1919 International Labour Organisation established as part of the Peace Treaty of Versailles. First International Labour Convention on minimum age of admission to employment adopted

1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed by United Nations General Assembly

1959 United Nations proclaims Declaration of the Rights of the Child

1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights adopted by United Nations General Assembly

1973 New, comprehensive international instruments on minimum age of admission to employment — Convention No. 138 and Recommendation No. 146 — adopted by International Labour Conference

1979 International Year of the Child. United Nations begins drafting a convention on the rights of the child. International Labour Conference adopts resolution on the International Year of the Child and the progressive elimination of child labour and transitional measures

1983 Report on child labour to the International Labour Conference by the Director-General of ILO

1989 United Nations adopts Convention on the Rights of the Child

Source: *Still so far to go: Child Labour in the World Today*, published by the International Labour Office, Geneva.

UNICEF/M17799/Maria Morrison

Children's work in many countries includes gathering fuel and water.

How countries' Summit follow-up is shaping up

'Encouraging' was the word as of November last year, as analysis of 109 responses to a UNICEF survey showed numerous national programmes of action taking form.

The survey, circulated to UNICEF offices in mid-1991, showed that 102 countries had programmes in the preliminary to the advanced stages of preparation. Twelve of these countries had already produced their programmes of action in either draft or final stage by the end of December. *(See below for the list of countries.*)* The remaining countries are expected to have these vital blueprints for meeting the child survival goals of the World Summit for Children ready early this year.

Other heartening figures that emerged: programmes of action are being prepared as integral parts of national development planning in 78 countries; in 43 countries, non-governmental, private sector and/or civic groups were involved in creating the programmes; in 50 countries, bodies or institutions with the power to affect budget allocations (such as finance ministries) were participating in the programme planning process; and local governments were preparing their own programmes of action in 49 countries.

With such evidence of widespread activity, emphasis now is needed on ensuring that the programmes of action are well thought out and realistic in their cost estimates, said Robert Ledogar, UNICEF Senior Planning Officer, and have societies' and governments' full commitment.

** As of December 1991, programmes of action had been received from Belize, Central African Republic, Costa Rica, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guinea, Iran, Maldives, Pakistan, Peru and Sri Lanka.*

Work of committee on children's rights takes shape

continued from page 1

emphasized that the reporting process should establish an open and constructive dialogue between the Committee and the countries that have ratified the Convention.

The three-week session also saw the start of an encouraging dialogue between the Committee and UN agencies and NGOs on cooperation to promote understanding and respect for children's rights. In this vein, the Committee adopted rules of procedure allowing NGOs to participate, by invitation, in Committee meetings. The Committee also stressed its desire to establish close and unbureaucratic working relations with UN agencies and NGOs in its work.

In other areas, the heavy workload that looms ahead prompted the Committee to ask the UN General Assembly for permission to meet twice a year beginning in 1993 (instead of only once a year) to review government reports. The Committee also elected a Chairperson, Mrs. Hoda Badran of Egypt, and three Vice-Chairs.

Guidelines for governments

In adopting guidelines for governments to follow in reporting on their activities with regard to children's rights, the Committee stressed the importance of countries' focusing on the problems and difficulties they may have in implementing the Convention and on finding constructive solutions.

The process of preparing a national report, Committee members believed, offered an important occasion for a country to conduct a comprehensive review of the various measures undertaken to harmonize national laws and policies with the Convention. In addition, the process should be one that encourages popular participation and public scrutiny of government policies.

Reports should be prepared thematically around clusters of rights, the Committee said. These themes should include general principles, civil rights and freedoms, family environment and alternative care, basic health and welfare, education, and leisure and cultural activities.

Another theme is that of children in need of special protection, such as children in emergency situations, in armed conflicts, in conflict with the law, in situations of exploitation and those belonging to a minority or indigenous group.

Reports should provide information on national legislation to implement the Convention and should contain statistics to illustrate specific situations.

During the discussion of the guidelines, UNICEF informed the Committee that all governments that had participated in the World Summit for Children were preparing national programmes of action, which should be completed by early 1992.

UNICEF encouraged the Committee to use the programmes as part of their background information on countries, since the programmes would undoubtedly provide information on the implementation of the Convention in countries.

Getting the word out

The Committee recognized the need for the Convention to be better understood, both by those preparing government reports as well as by the broader population. It asked the UN Secretary-General to strengthen the training of national personnel through the United Nations Centre for Human Rights (which is the Committee's secretariat). It also asked the Secretary-General to consider organizing workshops for government officials responsible for preparing reports for the Committee.

Overall, the Committee said it appreciated the importance of disseminating information about the Convention and children's rights, "to create greater awareness and a deeper understanding of its principles and provisions".

Formal, informal meetings planned

In addition to its request that it be permitted two meetings a year beginning in 1993, the Committee also asked the Secretary-General to schedule a one-week meeting for a Committee working group to consider the first round of government reports.

It also suggested establishing a pre-session working group that would meet approximately two months before each regular session to make a preliminary review of reports, as well as to consider technical assistance and international cooperation in the field of children's rights.

Committee members discussed holding informal meetings outside Geneva to generate greater awareness of its work, as well as to help members themselves gain a fuller understanding of the actual situation of children around the world.

The Committee decided to work towards holding a seminar on the situation of children in Latin America in 1992, and requested the cooperation of UNICEF and other possible sponsors. The Chairperson, Mrs. Badran, was designated to represent the Committee on the Preparatory Committee for the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights.

Dan Jacobs is a consultant editor and writer for UNICEF in New York.

Children learn peace in strife-torn Lebanon

Tuma Hazou reports on how children from warring camps become friends.

When Fadi met Daher at summer camp, they became friends — not a particularly remarkable event when children share some weeks at play, except for the fact that Fadi is a Maronite Christian and Daher is a Shiite Moslem, and they belong to two of the wary and recently warring communities of Lebanon.

The peace camp at Bezbina in North Lebanon where Fadi and Daher forged their friendship is one of some 500 camps held in Lebanon since May 1989. Organized and sponsored by UNICEF and a large number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), they have enabled 100,000 children of Lebanon's estranged Moslem and Christian communities to come together in the past three years.

The youngsters arrive at the camps with the fears, suspicions and hatreds that religious and communal bitterness have bred, some having even taken up arms behind barricades, shooting machine-guns and bazookas at the 'other side'. When the time comes to leave, however, they take understanding home with them instead of hate, and sometimes — like Fadi and Daher — they part as friends.

The children of Lebanon themselves were the ones who began asking for a place and a chance to get to know each other better, to begin to learn to live together. The keen interest orphaned children from different communities showed in each other, when UNICEF brought them together at a camp in the summer of 1988, sparked the idea of Education for Peace.

Then UNICEF started *SAWA* magazine (the name in Arabic means 'together') as part of the Education for Peace project. Begun as an alternative educational channel for children unable to attend school because of heavy fighting, it grew to a circulation of 70,000 throughout the country, distributed through dispensaries, clinics and other outlets of support for children, and run by NGOs. It proved itself an invaluable forum for children to share their concerns and fears. Through its pages, children discovered that peers in their own communities and even those from the 'opposite side' had similar worries and aspirations. Many of the letters and sketches published in *SAWA* showed children's preoccupation with war because of the bombings, killings and kidnappings they had lived with from birth. Children's letters to *SAWA* repeatedly revealed their strong desire to meet children of other communities.

When *SAWA* asked its young readers for ideas to remedy the sad situation in Lebanon, children from all communities and backgrounds responded overwhelmingly that they needed to come together and get to know each other, if they were to learn to live in tolerance, mutual respect and solidarity.

UNICEF turned to its NGO partners, 240 of which helped organize the peace camps. Five thousand university-age supervisors or monitors ran the camps and were the reason behind the success of the Education for Peace programme. They received special training, learning about Lebanon's geography, its diverse cultures and its oneness, as well as ways to promote ideas of peaceful coexistence and tolerance in their young charges.

Children from all of Lebanon's communities attended the peace camps, setting aside their prejudices, fears and mutual hatred, at least for a few weeks. There were camps for 5- to 12-year-olds, and for 13- to 18-year-olds. Children came from both poor and rich families. Some came from the Israeli-dominated security zone of South Lebanon and some from the Palestinian camps, others from East Beirut and the Christian villages of the central mountains of Lebanon, and from the Druze strongholds of the Shouf mountains.

The participants represented every shade of the Moslem and Christian religious and political spectrums: Amal and Hizbullah Shiite Moslems, Sunni Moslems, Maronite and Eastern Orthodox Christians. Many had to travel five or six hours on circuitous routes, skirting roadblocks and flashpoints to reach the camps. Once there, they learned traditional dances and folk songs, enjoyed theatre activities and puppet shows, had picnics and gradually learned to laugh and sing together. Trained supervisors ensured that children from mutually hostile circumstances were able to mingle with each other to form new friendships despite their political and religious backgrounds.

When it came time for the children to return home, many of them wept to leave peers of opposing faiths and factions whom they had grown up dreading to meet face to face, and now loved.

Sometimes the bond of friendship and love, established at the camps, survived the parting and helped to change families as well. Fadi's and Daher's parents, for example, recently met for a cordial although reserved get-together at Fadi's apartment in West Beirut.

The camps try to build a sense of communal oneness and solidarity — a foundation of tolerance and understanding — across factional lines, as a kind of national insurance for the future. They have succeeded so well that the programme is being introduced in schools as part of the national curriculum, to help institutionalize peace education. It looks as though the seeds sown three summers ago may survive the buffeting of the fighting and grow and bear fruit.

Tuma Hazou is the Regional External Relations Officer for UNICEF in Amman, Jordan.

UNICEF/83/364/Said Elaiab

Many militias recruited young children in Lebanon.

Artists acquire animation skills for development

By George McBean

Animators from Disney Studios, whose credits include such classic cartoons as *The Little Mermaid* and *Roger Rabbit*, shared their professional skills with 13 Caribbean and 4 African artists in the region's first Animation for Development Workshop in Jamaica last year. The two-week workshop helped the artists from the developing world acquire technical animation skills that they can adapt to the specific circumstances of their countries to spread information about health and development.

Because immunization and literacy rates are already high in the Caribbean, for example, participants from the region were coached in ways to use animation techniques to improve parenting skills and to tackle problems relating to child abuse. Artists from Africa, on the other hand, learned how animation can be used to deliver information on child survival.

Animated cartoons are emerging as an ever more powerful communication technique, able to inform and educate audiences as well as entertain, especially as electrical power and the medium of television reach more remote areas. In fact, the argument can be made that the skill of the animator in designing preventive health messages for television is as valuable in its own way to developing countries as the skills of a doctor.

Frank Gladstone, head of Disney's animation training in Florida, and animation artist Barry Temple taught the basic skills needed to make characters move during the workshop's first week, with participants designing characters they felt would be effective in their own countries. The animators also demonstrated how to colour and paint animation cells and how to construct a storyboard.

During the workshop's second week, all the artists teamed up to create a 60-second animated story on the theme of child abuse. Participants also mastered the techniques of synchronizing characters' lips.

No special equipment was used during the workshop, underscoring the cost-effectiveness of animation in development work. Only simple registration peg bars, pencils, paper, colours and light tables were used. The drawings were recorded, three frames at a time, on a regular U-matic videotape, using a camera mounted on a tripod and an editing control unit.

The Institute of Mass Communications at the University of the West Indies (CARIMAC) hosted the workshop, which was funded by the UNICEF Global Communication Support Fund. The Fund finances communications projects in support of UNICEF programme objectives in developing countries.

A videotape of the workshop and the finished production is available on request from the UNICEF Communication Officer, Caribbean Area Office, Box 1232, Barbados.

George McBean

Disney animator Bob Walker (right) explains the basics of animation to artists from the Caribbean and Africa. One of the strengths of the technique, according to Frank Gladstone, an animation trainer at Disney who helped run the workshop, is that it requires minimal technical equipment. Another animator, Barry Temple of *Roger Rabbit* fame and considered one of the world's top animators, was "amazed at everyone's capacity at the workshop".

George McBean is a Project Officer working on community and social mobilization in the UNICEF office in Bridgetown, Barbados.

Children grow 'trees of life' in Honduras

By Donna Paine

Every day before school, 14-year-old Sergio Montezuma Castillo runs into his yard to water a tiny apple tree. Then he puts fertilizer on it and brushes away any insects that have alighted during the night. For Sergio, this budding tree is more than just a seedling: it represents his hopes for the future.

"We learned in school that there's a problem in Honduras with the forest and it's hurting us all. Without trees there's no water, and without water we can't live", says the fourth-grader at Dolores Bustillo School.

Sergio and about 20 other students in his small school are members of a newly formed forestry club that is part of an environmental education programme currently being implemented by UNICEF in several of the *barrios marginales* that ring Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras.

Many of the barrio residents depend on firewood to cook all their meals and warm their huts. In fact, 80 per cent of all Tegucigalpans use wood as their main source of fuel for cooking.

Because of this need, however, Honduras loses 80,000 some hectares (197,600 acres) of forest each year in firewood. Fires and the making of the country's renowned wood products consume the rest.

The project, a collaborative effort between UNICEF, the Honduran Forestry Agency and other interested community organizations, is trying to teach children in primary school how to use these diminishing resources more efficiently.

When it first started in 1989, the project distributed more than 15,000 plants to some 5,000 children in 15 schools in the *barrios marginales*. Each child was given three trees to plant at home: one fruit tree, one ornamental and one to use for firewood.

The fruit trees were of various types, including mango, avocado, guava and citrus. The fuelwood trees, such as eucalyptus and acacia, were chosen because they reach maturity within a few years and can be pruned for use as firewood without being destroyed.

In the second year, the project was expanded to another 19 barrios, and this time 25,000 trees were given to the children and their families.

At the end of the first two years, 75 per cent of the trees provided to the children for planting were still alive and flourishing.

Seeing what a great success the project was and how enthusiastic the children were, in the third year UNICEF and the Forestry Agency revamped the programme to let the students learn how to sow their own seedlings. This time the programme was started in barrios that already had a UNICEF-sponsored water and sanitation project, where UNICEF had already developed a strong commitment to community organization and participation. The residents of the barrios manage their independent water and sanitation systems, which they helped pay for, construct and maintain.

In 1992, the project will expand its scope and message. Several more forestry clubs, school nurseries, and home and community tree-plantings will be supported not only in the *barrios marginales*, but also in a handful of other urban and rural areas around the country. The broader programme will emphasize environmental and health issues as well as reforestation. And an environmental education manual has been written for teachers to help them integrate information about the environment throughout the school curriculum.

The project is notable also because it has helped empower children to work towards improving their environment and to influence parents and other adults in an enthusiastic and non-threatening way.

Sergio tells of the last time he went to a nearby woods. "We saw some women cutting trees for firewood because they didn't know the danger they were causing." So he gently explained to the women that killing the trees would put all their futures at risk.

Donna Paine is a freelance writer (and currently a consultant for UNICEF) in Honduras.

Environment, development linked to children

continued from page 1

advocates for saving forests and wildlife may contribute to the degradation of the environment by their lifestyles. For example, a family with two cars in the North consumes far more resources, and is responsible for more greenhouse gases, than a farmer in Asia or Africa with two cows and enough land and fuelwood to feed a family of eight — notwithstanding the methane produced by the cattle and fields and the carbon dioxide from cooking fires. However, many who advocate for the physical environment do not distinguish between such 'survival emissions' and 'luxury emissions', claiming that "a tonne of greenhouse gases is a tonne, whether it be from cows or Concorde", as one environmental group put it.

Issues such as ozone depletion and global warming are ones that concern us all, since they will ultimately affect us all, and their impact will be greatest on the poor who have little capacity to absorb any set-back without jeopardizing their very survival. But linkages with the human and developmental aspects of the environment must be made, and for the sake of our children in both the developing and industrialized countries, a bridge must be found between the conflicting views of the environment. In the UNCED process, UNICEF is proposing just such a bridge — an approach that is just, equitable and human-centred, with children as the unifying theme.

The key to this approach is the impact on people at the community level, especially on children, since children are a particularly sensitive indicator of the well-being of a community. At the community and household level, the primary environmental care (PEC) approach involves meeting basic human needs, improving the environment and empowering the community.

Sustained improvements at the community level, however, may not be possible without national and international level policies that address such issues as debt, trade, climate change and structural adjustment. For example, while it is essential to conserve the world's forests to protect the global climate, national policies need to be formulated that protect people's rights to use their forests in environmentally sustainable ways.

A just, equitable, human-centred approach to environment problems is essential, with children as a unifying theme.

Bridging the gulfs

At the UNCED third preparatory meeting in Geneva in August and September of last year, notes of discord reflected the gulfs between North and South, between environmentalists and developmentalists, and even between women's groups that were not concerned about children and those that were.

The working groups drawing up options for Agenda 21 — the programme of action that it is hoped will come out of the Earth Summit — disagreed on the language and the content of many issues. Complaints were made that developmental issues did not receive sufficient attention. The North's consumption patterns and carbon dioxide emissions were blamed in working groups on climate change, while deforestation and population issues in the South were criticized by the North. For example, a delegate from an industrialized nation wanted to insert the phrase 'increase in population' in the list of 'socio-economic activities' responsible for the degradation of freshwater resources. Other delegates questioned whether producing babies should, strictly speaking, be called a socio-economic activity.

Arguments were raised in the women's groups' informal discussions, where some insisted that the issue of children be dropped from recommendations for 'programmes with beneficial impacts on women and children', saying that linking children with women weakened the women's issue. Others made the points that women do, indeed, have children, especially in the Third World; that many families in Africa are headed by women; that children — including the girl child — do grow up; and that mothers want their children to benefit from actions that benefit them.

An occasional reference to PEC was made in a few of the documents from the working groups of the third preparatory committee. The concept has yet to become a focus of UNCED, but it offers, together with the larger and more comprehensive human-centred approach to environment, a way to combine the forces and energies created by separate movements: those for children, for the environment, for women and for indigenous people. At the same time, it would also ensure that the promises made to children at the World Summit for Children are kept.

I'M VERY UPSET ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE
AND THE DEPLETION OF THE OZONE LAYER
WHAT ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT?
MY NEXT MEAL
DOUGBRUNNER 91

Doug Brunner

Yin Yin Nwe is a Project Officer, working on environment in the Programme Division, UNICEF New York.

INTERVIEW

Schools

During Zimbabwe's war of libera in forest camps were important country learned its lesson well: ority, and innovation and flexibi

Zimbabwe spends 25 per cent of its budget on education; 2.3 million of its young people attend school; 79 per cent of its children finish primary school; and about 46 per cent of the young people are in secondary schools. Since 1980, the year Zimbabwe gained independence, the number of primary schools in the country has increased 88 per cent; during the same period the number of illiterates, 2.5 million or 50 per cent of the adult population in 1980, has been halved.

How was all this possible? Why is Zimbabwe so different from the rest of Africa, where the past decade witnessed heavy cuts in spending for education? **Donata Lodi,** Chief of the Information Office of the Italian Committee for UNICEF, spoke about Zimbabwe's accomplishments and the challenges ahead with **FAY CHUNG, Zimbabwe's Minister of Education and Culture,** who for many years was in charge of reforming school curricula and teacher training.

Madam Minister, what is the reason for the success of Zimbabwe's school policies? How much of this has to do with your personal history and your militancy in education and politics?

In the late 1950s, when I finished university and began to teach, we had two kinds of schools, one for whites, which followed the Anglo-Saxon system, and a second-category school for Africans (so-called 'African education'), based on the same models but short on ideas, teachers and subsidies. I taught for five years in a secondary school in a black suburb. On the last days of the month one third of the children in my class literally went without

HAVING AN ENVIRONMENTAL

Some sugge from the Pa

By Paul Sommers

Like most people who work to improve children's lives, I was always on the look out for new opportunities. Well, I found one as big as the great outdoors. Here are two of the ways I succeeded in making the environment work for children when I was a Programme Officer in the Pacific.

Reading *Children and the Environment*, the booklet published by UNEP and UNICEF in 1990, was the starting point. It made me immediately aware that environment can be the unifying theme and the practical link between everything we do in our programme sectors. By enhancing a child's total environment, you certainly enhance survival and development.

The booklet got me thinking of ways to personalize and humanize the question. The first thing I did was to phrase the issue in terms of 'children and their environment'. The next was to begin using the concept to broaden UNICEF's reach and impact.

Putting children into their environment

I began by contacting a small Pacific regional environmental organization, which was not a traditional UNICEF programme partner, based at the Fiji campus of the University of the South Pacific (USP). The chairperson described the group's activities, which primarily involved informing the general public about issues such as air pol-

born in struggle

ion, the textbooks typed out eapons in the struggle. The ducation remains a high pri- ty are still keys to success.

ood: their parents cut down on food in rder to pay school fees. And only 2 per ent of African children could afford sec- ndary school. My generation grew up on hese 'facts'.

After studying for three years in England, I went to teach at the University of Lusaka, in independent Zambia. All of us, the so-called 'governing class' of Zimbabwe today, learned a great deal, in the negative sense as well as the positive, from the African independence experiences of the 1960s. For example, the concept of free schools for all is fine, but as soon as the prices of raw materials dropped, education expenditure had to be cut. Generally, we realized that we, the African intellectuals, had to play a more direct role in politics.

When did this commitment to politics turn into direct participation in the struggle for freedom?

Around 1975, when Ian Smith's Rhodesian Government began to attack us directly in Zambia, with veritable terrorist raids, I and others decided to join the armed struggle. I was put in charge of schools in the bases of the Zimbabwe African National Union in Mozambique. We had 30,000 school-age children in the camps in Mozambique and only three teachers. There were no books; there were no schools. It was there, in the camps in Mozambique, that we began building the educational system of what was to become Zimbabwe.

The combination of theoretical training and practice teaching used then is still one of the pillars of our scholastic institutions. For example, the method of training we use at ZINTEC, our teachers' college, which is considered one of the most innovative experiments in the developing countries, started then. To make our own textbooks we started out with paper, typewriters and mimeograph machines (hand-operated ones, because we had no electricity in the camps) provided by UNICEF. In the end, in 1980, we were able to provide education from nursery school up to the university level. So, you see, ever since the years of the war of liberation we have considered education a basic expenditure sector, just as much as and even more than the military sector.

And after independence, how could that wartime experience be extended to so many in a country with 2.5 million people who could not read or write?

We wanted the people to help, we wanted to involve families and communities and have them take responsibility for education. In effect, we asked the people to help rebuild the school system. The cost of building new schools, for example, was and still is covered by families. It is true that 25 per cent of the national budget is spent on education, but since independence, families have invested the same percentage of their budgets in schooling for their children.

In the first 10 years of independence, almost 60 per cent of education expenditure was borne directly by the people. This helped create a widespread awareness of the value of education. Moreover, the policy of linking government aid to local initiative helped, for example, to improve agricultural production in areas owned by African farmers; today we are more than self-sufficient in terms of food.

In concrete terms, what have the Government and your Ministry done to foster the development of the school system?

In the early years, we provided school books free for everyone. Nowadays, books are free only for schools in poorer areas. In recent years, we have concentrated chiefly on teacher training and refresher courses and on the reform of school programmes.

How is Zimbabwe responding to the need for budget restructuring imposed by economic adjustment policies? What concrete effect will this have on education expenditure?

We have no intention of making substantial cuts in the state budget for education. But we have to create a more efficient link between the labour market and the school system if we want our high level of spending on education to make real sense for the country. There is increasing pressure to impose fees for compulsory schooling as well, but the obvious result would be an increase in school drop-outs. In concrete terms that would mean education for male children only. This is a price we are not prepared to pay.

What solutions, then, might be considered? And what is the possible role of international cooperation?

The solution might lie in the flexibility of the system: fees, yes, but not for all and not for certain areas of the country; and in any case, taxes should be earmarked for improving the school system. As for the role of international cooperation: first of all, it has already been shown that 60 per cent of foreign aid to the education sector in Africa actually soon returns to the donor countries, mostly in the form of payments for consultation.

There is a clear risk of dependency on the choices and models of the donor countries, which might be particularly dangerous in the field of education. It works better with international agencies. UNICEF, for example, has always given us a great deal of support in basic education, literacy and preschool programmes. In any case, I believe that we should also learn to say 'no' to foreign aid, if the conditions that are imposed are in conflict with our basic policies.

Another way of responding to the current impasse is to define priorities more clearly. A school that takes account of a country's social and economic reality must not let this keep it from aiming at the highest standards of quality. Otherwise we would only have another version of the 'African education' of the old Rhodesia.

Fay Chung, Zimbabwe's Minister of Education and Culture.

MPACT ON PROGRAMMING:

stions cific

ution, marine pollution and overfishing, oil degradation due to overlogging and oor commercial farming methods — all hrased in strictly physical terms.

I asked the chairperson what he hought about injecting a human dimension nto these physical environmental issues, by iscussing children and logging or children nd air pollution, for example. His reply vas an enthusiastic "Yes, why not, that would be good. Everybody loves children."

So, we explored opportunities for leveloping a communication strategy based n Pacific children and their environment, sing the channels the group usually used, uch as radio shows and lectures to choolchildren and interested public groups. The strategy ensured that concerns bout children received wider exposure, nd it enabled us to add the socio-economic limension to discussions on the physical nvironment, showing how socio-economic ssues affect the decisions made about that nvironment.

My second effort involved the Ministry f Agriculture, an ongoing partner in the UNICEF Pacific programme. Up to this ime, little progress had been made in integrating nutrition promotion activities into he Ministry's overall programme, especially in their crop-production training programme for farming families. It occurred o me that the environment offered a good way of addressing the farming family's food security needs.

UNICEF/4375/90/Carolyn Watson

A group of low-income, urban Fijian women using environmentally friendly food-growing techniques in their home garden.

Soil conservation is a children's issue

The Ministry of Agriculture invited me to speak to farmers attending a ginger growers' workshop on ways to integrate food crops into ginger-based farming systems. Ginger growing poses particular problems in Fiji, where it is cultivated on some of the steepest hillsides. Because most farmers do not use soil conservation methods when they grow ginger, the soil is eroding at a very rapid rate, and experts predict the growers have only a few more years before the land becomes unproductive.

In speaking with the farmers, I made children the key. Instead of talking about the need to prevent soil erosion, or the need to grow food crops, I talked to the farmers about their dreams for their children. They all said they wanted their children to live in villages, because they believe villages are where Fijians were meant to live and where they can best practice their customs and traditions. When asked about life in the towns and cities, they all said no, they would not like to see their children living in towns as there are few jobs and there is no 'dignity' in living on someone else's land.

I then asked them how they would feel if their children had no choice but to move to the towns. When the group looked puzzled, I pointed to their current methods of growing ginger, which they agreed were damaging their soil. They said that if they were to grow the food crops that ginger had supplanted, they would never cultivate them in the same way in which they grew ginger.

The discussion helped the farmers realize that if they didn't change the way they were growing ginger, they would destroy their physical environment and their children would suffer. Without environmentally sound cultivation, there would be no income and no food crops. Children would have no choice but to go to the towns.

The farmers said they had never considered the impact of their ginger-growing methods from this human perspective. It convinced them that they needed to adopt soil-conservation methods to preserve their environment, on which their culture, and their children's future, depended.

The matter didn't end there. After the meeting, the agricultural officer suggested that we try to develop a plan to support the farmers in their commitment to soil conservation. We discussed ways to mobilize many of those who benefit from the cultivation of ginger and who would surely suffer if soil erosion went unchecked. Among them we counted the management and workers of the ginger-processing factory, the banks, the agricultural supply stores and transport companies, and the local churches. In discussions with these groups we used the same strategy we had used with the farmers, telling them it was in the interest of their children for them to encourage and actively support the ginger growers in adopting soil-conservation methods.

These are just two ways to put the environmental case for children and the human case for the environment. The possibilities are almost endless. Good luck!

Paul Sommers was a UNICEF Project Officer, based in the Suva Office in Fiji. He worked on family food production throughout the Pacific region.

VIEWPOINT

Seven radical proposals for world economic development

Professor U. B. Lindstrom, Executive Secretary of the Finnish Committee for UNICEF, offers his opinion on how the world can ensure sustainable progress.

The promises of the World Summit for Children and concrete accomplishments, such as higher child immunization rates, are reasons to be optimistic about improving the situation of children, especially in the developing countries. But fundamental problems remain.

Will leaders in the South now start channelling more funds into basic health programmes than into arms? Will politicians in the North radically change their economic and development programmes, so that the poor are ensured a rudimentary standard of living and the world's environment is protected?

I am not convinced these changes will happen, unless sustained efforts are made to ensure that they do.

Industrialized nations of today consume in one year oil that nature took 1 million years to form. Since the Industrial Revolution, consumption of fossil energy has grown eightyfold, consumption of manufactures one hundredfold and the exchange of goods eight hundredfold. Such rapid economic growth in the northern hemisphere has resulted in unprecedented wealth for one fifth of mankind.

However, 1 billion people live in absolute poverty in developing countries, and most of the world's remaining 3 billion people are close to hunger level. Poor countries are caught in a debt trap, their natural resources continue to be shamelessly exploited and the prices they receive for their commodities continue to decline steadily. The present world economy seems to require that the affluence of people in the North, and of ruling élites in the South, be paid for with the lives and suffering of innocent children.

In my own country, the average consumption of fossil energy is 5,500 kg. of oil equivalent per person a year; in an African country it is 42 kg. In my country, 0.7 per cent of children die before their fifth birthday; in the same African country, the figure is 25 per cent.

To explain such disparities, people point to high rates of population growth in the developing countries. Yet while it is certainly a fact that the world's population is now 5.3 billion, we also have 550 million cars on earth. Which has graver consequences for the global environment, the annual addition of 85 million poor people or 35 million new cars?

Every year the consumption of fossil fuels in the industrialized countries increases by 3 per cent. This means that consumption doubles in 20 years. Is the consequence of this increase on the greenhouse effect less frightening than the increase in population? In my view, both are frightening. Both also show that we should avoid trying to simplify complicated problems.

New global development strategy needed

To avert the human and environmental catastrophe facing us, I think we need to do more than pay lip-service to the concept of sustainable development — which the Brundtland Commission defined broadly as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". I would like to suggest that seven key proposals be included in a new global development strategy:

1 People in the industrialized countries of the North must recognize that it is impossible to have sustainable development without protecting the ecosystems of the South and, therefore, without safeguarding the right of the poor to a decent standard of living. Instead of seeing this as 'giving up' something, the North should seize it as an opportunity to gain more lasting cultural, ethical and ecological values.

2 To achieve the goals of sustainable development, the Charter of the United Nations needs to be revised to include environmental provisions. The United Nations Environment Programme should be given enhanced authority and its annual budget increased from $30 million to $300 million.

3 The governments of industrialized countries should agree as soon as possible to reduce their consumption of fossil energy by 2 per cent annually, leading to a 40 per cent reduction by the year 2010, concluding an international agreement to raise fuel prices two to threefold gradually over the next few years. Developing countries would receive 15 per cent to 20 per cent of the income from such a tax for environmental protection measures.

4 World trade should be liberalized by removing all artificial barriers against Third World products in the markets of industrialized countries. Development assistance given by industrialized countries should be radically redirected to basic services programmes.

5 The total debt of developing nations should be transformed into basic services programmes, including environmental protection, and financed in local currency by developing country governments. The rights of local populations to own, use and protect natural resources should be increased. Developing countries must shift priorities towards satisfying the needs of the poorest groups. Currently, spending on weapons consumes 5.5 per cent of developing countries' gross national product and primary health care only 1.4 per cent. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund could make a shift in priorities a prerequisite for loans.

6 All nations should commit themselves to ensuring that family planning and birth spacing are made mandatory components of all basic health programmes.

7 Both industrialized and developing countries should promote erosion prevention by investing heavily in agro-forestry and afforestation programmes. A suitable target would be to have a 1 per cent annual increase in the forest cover in poor countries. According to recent estimates by Dutch scientists, large-scale afforestation is by far the cheapest way of combating the greenhouse effect.

An invitation:

First Call for Children *would like to ask all readers to speak their minds — in 1,000 words or less — on issues concerning children and development in 'Viewpoint'. Send contributions to the Editor,* **First Call for Children,** *UNICEF, 3 United Nations Plaza, H-9F, New York, NY 10017. Fax number: (212) 326-7768. The 'Viewpoint' column reflects solely the opinion of the writer.*

Workshop calls for right to intervene for children

The largest and most complex emergencies of recent times, occurring almost simultaneously last year in the Gulf, Bangladesh and the Horn of Africa, nearly overwhelmed the international community's capacity to provide effective emergency relief. They also aroused new concern about children as victims of armed conflicts.

As a result, the United Nations has before it proposals for strengthening its capacity to meet emergency situations, and UNICEF called a meeting in September of major humanitarian organizations to consider ways of improving coordination in relief operations.

In a related context, UNICEF staff members, drawn from countries at war or where wars have just ended, met in Mombasa, Kenya, in early October last year for an interregional training workshop on children in armed conflicts, which examined such subjects as unaccompanied children, children with psychosocial problems, disability prevention and rehabilitation, peace education, negotiating peace for children and the transition from conflict to development.

Participants concluded that children need to be healed physically and psychosocially to avoid long-term disability. They repeated the need for prevention, early detection and treatment and, for the most severe cases, long-term rehabilitation, noting that programmes should be community- and family-based and rely on traditional practices whenever possible.

They also urged that the right of access of UNICEF and other humanitarian organizations to provide protection and assistance "must be expanded, clarified, made known to all conflicting parties, and, if necessary, enforced by a permanent United Nations peacekeeping force".

Mr. Vincent O'Reilly, a UNICEF officer who has organized humanitarian relief in numerous conflicts (and is the recently appointed UNICEF Representative in Kenya), explained the unique value of UNICEF's development of 'corridors of tranquillity' or 'zones of peace' for humanitarian purposes.

"In each case", Mr. O'Reilly said, "UNICEF's humanitarian mandate allowed it to negotiate arrangements with insurgent groups without conferring recognition on them or appearing to undermine the sovereignty of the central government.

"If we are to safeguard and advance this new humanitarian ethic of 'first call'", he told the workshop, "we must be given the right to interfere whenever the exercise of sovereignty is used to overrule the moral imperative of extending the basic human right to protection and humanitarian assistance."

The workshop participants concluded that a much stronger international consensus was needed for the protection and support of children and women in armed conflicts, noting that the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international conventions provided the legal basis for this commitment and every effort should be made to assure their full implementation.

— *Dan Jacobs, author of* The Brutality of Nations, *frequently writes on children in war.*

UNICEF/915.67/Jane Taylor

A strong international consensus is needed to protect and support children and women in armed conflicts, according to workshop participants.

Angola reunites families

Angola's National Family Tracing and Placement Project, which began in 1990, has managed to reunite over 250 children with their families and place an almost equal number in substitute families throughout the country, despite the fact that it faces a shortage of funds and materials.

The task is big: an estimated 50,000 children were separated from their families during the country's 16-year war. However, since the cease-fire was signed in the middle of last year, travel and communications within the country have improved, making it easier to reunite children who have been missing with their families.

The project has used the media to announce orphaned or abandoned children, and project staff have even stood in open markets displaying photographs and facts about children.

Special programmes have also been started in each of the 18 provinces. Training seminars have been held in five provinces to teach people how to locate family members. And staff of the tracing project interview children in orphanages to try and trace the children's roots, working sometimes with nothing more than a street name.

The project doesn't forget the older children of ages between 16 and 20. If their families cannot be found, the emphasis shifts to reintegrating them into society, according to Maggie Brown, Save the Children (UK) Representative in Angola, who works closely with the tracing project, which is sponsored by UNICEF.

BOOK REVIEW

Courage to Care: Reaching Children in War, by Cole P. Dodge and Magne Raundalen, Sigma Forlag, Bergen, Norway, 1991.

Reviewed by Dan Jacobs

At a time when the world is at last acknowledging that wars are harmful to children, Cole Dodge and Magne Raundalen have brought out a second book detailing the ways children suffer, particularly in civil conflicts, and what must be done for them. The two have been there, in Mozambique, Sudan and Uganda, and along with others who make contributions to this valuable book, they bring insights that will help in devising programmes needed to relieve the terrible plight of the smallest victims of armed conflicts.

Certainly the 'corridors of peace' that Cole Dodge, now UNICEF Representative in Bangladesh (but writing here with the disclaimer that the opinions expressed are his own), attempted to negotiate when serving as Representative first in Uganda and later in Sudan are one example.

The low-cost, simplified techniques of post-trauma rehabilitation UNICEF is now assisting in Kuwait, Lebanon and Sri Lanka are other examples, as are the programmes aided by Save the Children and other humanitarian organizations working in Mozambique and elsewhere to help children profoundly traumatized by experiences either as child soldiers or child victims.

The trauma children suffer has only recently been recognized as deep, distorting their future development and remaining with them throughout life. Extensive treatment for psychological as well as physical wounds is needed. Yet, even though the Convention on the Rights of the Child now guarantees such rehabilitation, the resources are not always there.

As Cole Dodge writes in the opening words of the book: "War is expensive. Not only to human life but also to governmental budgets, particularly the soft social sectors that are so important to children. Many countries allocate and invest much greater amounts of money in their war efforts than in health." Perhaps the pressure that UNDP, the World Bank and the IMF are beginning to exert on governments of developing countries to spend less on armaments and their military and more on social programmes will help reverse the trend.

Or the solution may come from the children themselves. In talking with street boys of Khartoum, many of whom had been driven out of their home areas by war, Dodge and Raundalen found that their gangs "comprised members from all areas, all religions, speaking different languages, from diverse tribes. These groups functioned well together, in stark contrast to Sudanese society as a whole, which was torn apart by these same differences. The street children knew all about tribal animosities and, in response, called themselves the 'New Sudan'."

Children may be ready to build the 'New Sudan' or 'New Lebanon'. The programmes UNICEF is supporting in Lebanon and Sri Lanka, called Education for Peace *(see story on page 7)*, count on children to lead the way.

Albania's silent suffering

By Edgar Koh

The world once knew too little about Albania. Now, it seems not to want to know too much. Albania has emerged from 40 years of isolation as the most underdeveloped of all European countries. The gross national product (GNP) per capita has declined to US$400, no more than that of such African countries as Guinea, Lesotho and Mauritania.

Albania blazed briefly on television screens and front pages last year as tens of thousands of its desperate and disillusioned citizens made a break across the Adriatic Sea for a more tolerable life. But events in the USSR and elsewhere in Eastern Europe soon overshadowed the situation.

The crisis has not gone away. It has merely lost its media appeal and become a silent little emergency on the doorstep, indeed within the threshold, of Europe: silent but deadly, especially to children and women.

A recent UNICEF mission discovered that the infant mortality rate has risen to 34 per 1,000 live births and may be as high as 40 per 1,000 in the poorer mountainous districts.

Half the children in the countryside already are malnourished. The National Institute of Paediatrics recently recorded a malnutrition rate of 32 per cent even in the outskirts of Tirana, largest and richest of the country's 27 districts. More women than in any other European country die of pregnancy or childbirth complications.

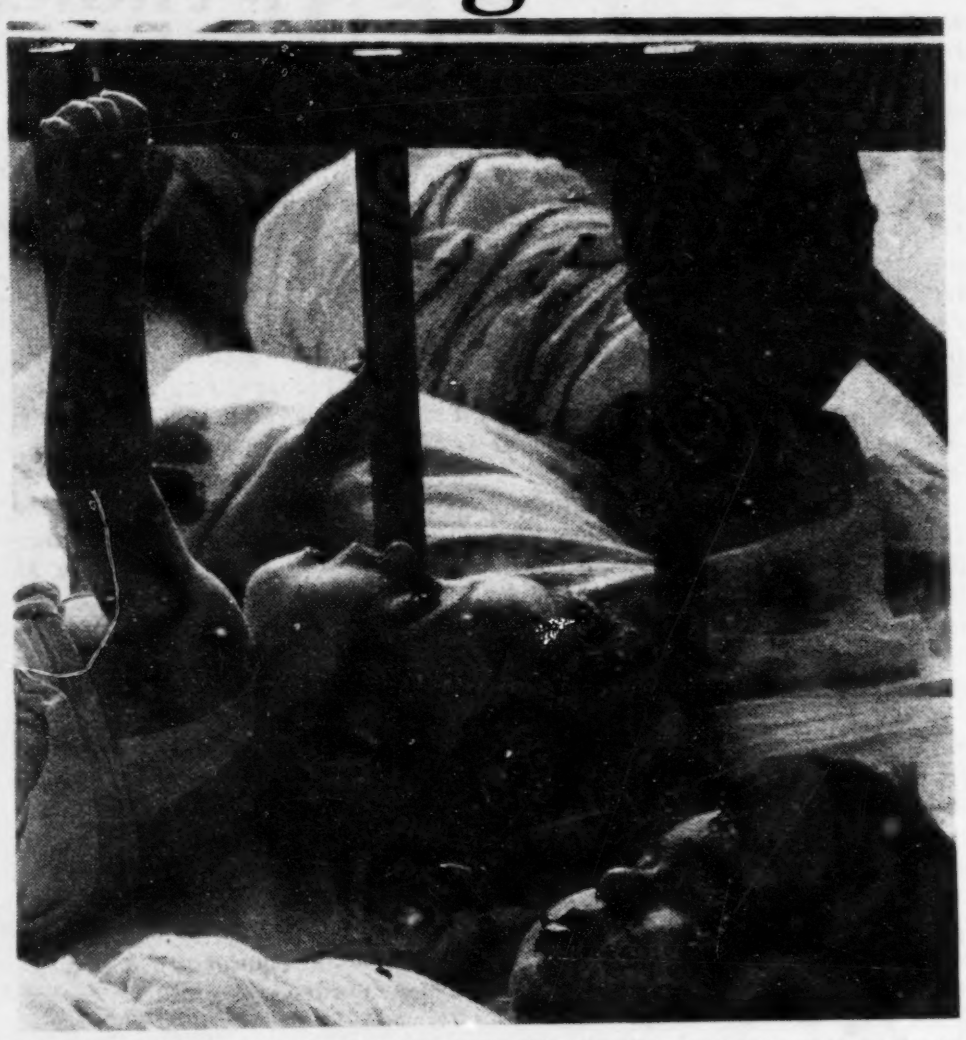
Albania now has only the remnants of what was a comprehensive health system. Hospitals are short of food, essential drugs and basic medical equipment.

The University Hospital of Tirana has only one incubator. Surgeons operate without gloves or sutures. Although hepatitis B is virtually endemic, with 13,000 new cases every year, the country cannot afford to immunize even the newborns. The risk of disease transmission is high because of the shortage of needles, syringes and sterilizers. "I would not live here if there were one case of AIDS", said Health Minister Dr. Sabit Brokaj. "The disease would spread like wildfire."

Sick and malnourished children, skeletal and fly-covered, lie silent and crowded in hospital cribs. "We don't have any antibiotics left", said a doctor.

Farm privatization has had a mixed impact on the food situation. Some children in rural areas, where two thirds of Albania's 3.2 million people live, did slightly better last summer, because grain, vegetables and milk were available from the de-collectivized plots and herds. Others, however, have fared even worse than before because cooperative stores have closed or are running short of food.

Farm privatization has also affected school enrolment. According to Education Ministry officials, 10,000 children dropped out of school this past year, a tenfold rise over previous years. Most are boys whose parents want them to work on newly privatized farms. Also, 750 of the 3,700 schools have been demolished in recent months, some because they were built on land now reclaimed by previous owners.



UNICEF/48042/91/Edgar Koh

Many parents do not take their treated babies home from malnutrition wards because they cannot feed them. Ten of the 100 children in the Tirana malnutrition hospital have been abandoned by their parents.

In addition to efforts by other organizations, UNICEF has delivered 200 tonnes of medical supplies, high-protein food and vegetable oil worth more than US$500,000 to Albania in an emergency programme to help children survive the winter.

Unlike other Eastern European countries, Albania did not have adequate social insurance. There was no child allowance beyond a small one-time payment when a baby was born. All payments have now been stopped. Poor children are in free fall, with no safety net.

Edgar Koh, of the Division of Information, UNICEF New York, accompanied the recent UNICEF mission to Albania.

Poll ranks world threats, aid agencies

Wars and conflicts were identified as the biggest threat to humanity by nearly one third of the people responding to a May 1991 poll in Finland by Finnish Gallup.

The poll, conducted among 755 people, aimed to discover what Finns consider the greatest threats facing the world and their attitudes towards development assistance organizations working in the field.

The other two threats considered the most serious were population growth in developing countries, by 55 per cent of respondents, and environmental problems in Eastern Europe, by 43 per cent. Men were more concerned about population growth than women; women showed more concern about the greenhouse effect. Concern about the environment in Eastern Europe rose with the age of the respondent: nearly one fourth of those over 50 years old named this as the biggest threat.

Long-term assistance favoured over emergency aid

Nearly 70 per cent of the respondents said that long-term programmes in water, health and education were the types of development assistance they would support, while only 14 per cent of respondents said they supported emergency assistance. Among the supporters of long-term programmes there were more women than men, and more people who lived in urban than rural areas. No gender difference was found among supporters of emergency programmes.

Eleven per cent of respondents did not in principle support any development assistance abroad whatsoever, with twice as many men than women feeling this way. Over half of this group explained that they wished to support domestic charities. More than a third said that they did not believe their donations would reach the right recipients.

Development organizations ranked

The Red Cross and UNICEF received the highest ratings, being considered reliable or very reliable by 87 per cent and 84 per cent of people respectively. Sixty per cent of respondents, more often women than men, said they wished to support UNICEF programmes by buying UNICEF cards or products.

— From the Finnish Committee for UNICEF.

For the record

Dominican Republic

The Dominican Republic's National Commission to Monitor the Goals of the World Summit for Children recently published the first edition of *Frente a la Cumbre*. The monthly newsletter informs readers about the activities of the Commission in meeting the goals of the Summit.

Pakistan

"Child Survival, Protection and Development" was the theme of a workshop for rural journalists conducted by the Department of Mass Communication of the University of Sindh last year. The 26 participating journalists attended sessions conducted by doctors, academics and social workers on the development of women and children and other issues, such as safe water, nutrition and health. Participants created the Sindh Journalists' Network for Children to support children's rights, health and development.

Zimbabwe

Between 60 and 80 per cent of agricultural work in Africa is done by women. Women also are responsible for 90 per cent of all food processing on the continent. Florence Chitauro, Zimbabwe's Deputy Minister for Manpower Planning and Social Welfare, cited these figures to stress the need for consultation with women — who in large part are the primary users of technologies — when new technologies are introduced. Speaking at a seminar in Harare last year, she also emphasized that communities need to be involved in the design of technologies appropriate to their skills, income level and environments if the world is to achieve sustainable development.

NEWS BRIEFS

SCOUTS THINK AND PLAY GLOBALLY: At the 17th World Scouts Jamboree held in Seoul, Korea, last year, participating Scouts had a chance to learn about the problems of developing countries at a new subcamp called the Global Development Village (GDV). It was the first time such a subcamp was organized and it proved very popular, emerging as the second-best attended activity at the major scouting event. UNICEF played an important part in keeping the Scouts engaged at GDV: one of the highlights of the 45 development-related activities at the development subcamp were 20 games sponsored by UNICEF Korea on themes such as immunization, breastfeeding and Education for All. About 12,000 Scouts, including 100 children from Chernobyl — and the King of Sweden — took part in the UNICEF games, aided by 60 trained volunteers in four language groups. Each Scout and all national Scout associations at the Jamboree were given the UNICEF game kits to take home with them. The kits will also be used in Korean primary schools. According to Jacques Moreillon, Secretary-General of the World Organization of the Scout Movement, the GDV camp will definitely be part of the World Jamboree to be held in the Netherlands in 1995.
—Ralph Diaz, UNICEF Representative, Seoul, Republic of Korea

ACTION KIT FROM NGO YOUTH: In Bogotá, a Red Cross youth team, with support from a young doctor, provides street children with health care, education and other assistance. In Kenya, the Embu Youth Group (of the Red Cross) uses drama and songs to teach people in villages and market-places about AIDS. These are just two of the actions described in *On the Move*, an excellent resource published in May 1991 to inspire young people to help improve their world. A consultative group of 18 international youth NGO networks collaborated on the kit, which is part of the Youth NGO World Initiative for Children, launched at a round table meeting of the youth NGOs in Geneva in September 1990 to prepare for the World Summit for Children. The kit covers six fundamental issues affecting children: the Convention on the Rights of the Child, health, environment, education, structural adjustment and social mobilization. Published with UNICEF support, the kit is available from UNICEF, Geneva.

FOR FATHERS ONLY: Changes in the Jamaican family, including the growing employment of women outside the home, mean that men are assuming more responsibility for nurturing their children than ever before, according to Dr. Barry Chevannes, lecturer at the University of the West Indies, who has founded a group to help men grow in their new roles. The group plans to start a peer counselling programme to advise 75 men on a range of topics including human sexuality and anatomy, sexually transmitted diseases, sex role divisions, parenting and child development. It will also use drama-in-education techniques to reinforce its messages, with the goal of staging presentations in local communities and on television. The 'Fathers Only' project receives some funding from UNICEF, but additional funding is still needed.

EDUCATION FOR ALL GOAL THREATENED: Despite the unusual success of developing countries in increasing primary school enrolment between the 1960s and 1988, 107 million primary school age children remain unenrolled, according to a report released by the UNESCO Division of Statistics late last year. The report says the vast majority — 90 million — of these children live in southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. The most disturbing percentage of primary school age children not attending school was recorded in Somalia, where the figure soared to nearly 90 per cent. However, in fully 18 of the 37 countries surveyed in sub-Saharan Africa, 50 per cent or more of primary school age children were not attending school in 1988. In Latin America and the Caribbean, Guatemala and Haiti had 45 per cent and 56 per cent respectively of their primary school age children not in school.

LATIN AMERICAN YOUTH AT INCREASED RISK OF VIOLENCE: Reports from Latin America, in the grip of a severe economic crisis for almost a decade, indicate that the unemployment and impoverishment of the region may contribute to growing violence affecting children and youths. In one of its regularly published reports, the Multidisciplinary Research Unit on Violence at São Paulo University says 171 children were murdered in the province between September 1990 and August 1991. The University acknowledged that its statistics were incomplete, as the figures were based on local press reports in which not all murders are covered. The Provincial Government's Children's Office said reports by the Forensic Medicine Institute showed that actually as many as 427 children and adolescents had been murdered in São Paulo state during the first five months of 1991 alone.

The São Paulo University research unit on violence publishes its findings regularly to pressure authorities into adopting measures to prevent violence against children, in accordance with the recently approved "Children's Statute".

Similarly grim evidence of violence against young people was discovered recently in Peru, where unemployment and underemployment exceed 90 per cent. In the latest incident, the bodies of children between the ages of 10 and 14 were discovered in graves in Peru's eastern province of Madre de Dios, an area where gold is mined under often intolerable conditions. Reports indicate that the children, believed to have been enticed or coerced into working in the area's gold-mines, died from tropical diseases and malnutrition; some had been shot and most bore distinct signs of torture. To help end the exploitation of children in the area, the subregional labour director of Madre de Dios province ordered three private employment agencies that recruit gold-field workers closed.

TELETHON FOR CHILDREN: Some 300,000 Brazilians contributed US$1.3 million towards UNICEF-supported programmes for street children, basic education and child survival in north-eastern Brazil during a 25-hour telethon last year. It was part of a national campaign promoted by TV Globo on behalf of children's rights in Brazil, and over 700 nationally known artists, journalists and media professionals participated, including internationally known personalities such as Mike Tyson, Pelé and Julio Iglesias, who donated personal belongings that were auctioned off. The national telephone company provided toll-free telephone lines.

CYANIDE THREAT TO TROPICAL REEFS: Fishermen who seek tropical fish in the crevices of the coral reefs off the Philippines are learning to use small-mesh nets to capture their quarries rather than lethal cyanide to stun them, thanks to a project funded by the International Development Research Centre in Canada. So far, 200 of the 1,500 fisherman who dive for the fish have changed their technique and in the process have learned about the life of the reef, basic fish biology and underwater safety.

Supplying tropical fish for aquariums in the developed world is a thriving business in the Philippines. Although using cyanide to catch the fish is illegal, 80 per cent are caught by the method, the fishermen squirting the chemical from plastic squeeze bottles into the reefs to stun the fish where they hide. However, the poison also kills other fish, eggs, larvae and molluscs. Continued use damages the reef itself and can ultimately help destroy it. (The most severe risk to the reef comes from dynamite extraction of coral for construction and sedimentation caused by run-off from deforested land.)

The change in fishing technique that the project encourages saves lives, health and money. Cyanide causes rashes among fishermen who spend hours swimming through clouds of the chemical, and fish caught for food in areas where cyanide is used have caused intestinal problems for consumers. And if the chemical is accidentally inhaled, it kills. In addition, a fisherman currently spends US$500 for cyanide each year, approximately half his gross income. The small-mesh nets cost only about $25.

BREASTFEEDING PROTECTS AGAINST CHOLERA: A case-controlled study, published in the *American Journal of Epidemiology* (Vol. 131, No. 3) found breastfeeding associated with a 70 per cent reduction in the risk of severe cholera among children under 36 months of age in rural Bangladesh, where cholera is endemic. The research also suggested that exclusive breastfeeding gives complete protection against severe cholera. Although the association between breastfeeding and a reduced risk of severe cholera became less with age, the effect was clearly evident up to 30 months of age.

The investigators felt that breastmilk may contain specific anticholera immune properties. Other possible explanations for the effect include the fact that breastfed children have less opportunity to take in the organism that causes cholera through contaminated food or liquid; and that breastfeeding may confer increased resistance to cholera in another way, through improved nutritional status.

CRICKETER KHAN BOOSTS UK IMMUNIZATION DRIVE: Imran Khan, UNICEF Special Representative for Sports and one of the world's greatest cricketers, visited clinics in London last year to encourage people to have their children immunized against the six vaccine-preventable diseases. Because lapses in immunization coverage don't exist only in the developing world, the UK Committee for UNICEF and the Health Education Authority launched a £2 million campaign to boost coverage levels.

QUOTABLE: "This tremendous achievement — resulting from the most massive international peacetime collaboration in history — is now preventing the deaths of some 3 million young children each year, and enabling many millions more to grow in better health and without disabilities." *Dr. Hiroshi Nakajima, Director-General of the World Health Organization, and Mr. James P. Grant, UNICEF Executive Director, in their official statement made during the universal child immunization goal certification ceremony at the United Nations, on 8 October 1991.*

EVENTS AND MEETINGS

January		
8-10	Dakar, Senegal	A colloquium of mayors as "Defenders of Children"
22-24	Amsterdam, Netherlands	Second International Conference on Children's Ombudswork
25-31	Dublin, Ireland	International Conference on Water and the Environment
29-31	Maputo, Mozambique	Southern Africa Development Coordination Conference Annual Meeting
February		
11	New York, USA	NGO Committee on UNICEF Board Meeting
—	—	SAARC Second Conference on the Girl Child
—	Brussels, Belgium	World's Women Summit
March		
Mar. 2-Apr. 3	New York, USA	UNCED Fourth Preparatory Conference
8	—	International Women's Day
—	Costa Rica	Youth Summit on the Environment (Canadian and Costa Rican Youth NGOs)
—	New Delhi, India	Commonwealth Environment Conference (CEC)
11-14	Florence, Italy	Children and the Environment, Eastern European Media Seminar
April		
April-Oct.	Seville, Spain	EXPO '92
3- 5	Florence, Italy	Consultative Meeting on National Capacity Building for Child Survival and Development and Operations Research
7	Global	World Health Day (WHO)

NGO Action for Children

Turning the Declaration to deeds

"Turning the Declaration of the World Summit for Children into concrete deeds" was a major theme of the 1991 NGO Committee on UNICEF Forum and of its opening address by President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe. Held in Kadoma, Zimbabwe, from 4 to 8 November, the Forum was one of the first major international meetings to focus specifically on achieving Summit goals. Entitled *Effective Participation in Local and Global Child Development*, the meeting was attended by 164 participants from 42 countries (34 of them African) and 113 NGOs. The location of the meeting represented a commitment by both the NGO Committee on UNICEF and UNICEF to make Africa a top priority in the 1990s.

Using key documents as guidelines for action (the OAU Charter on Rights and Welfare of the Child, the Arusha Declaration on Popular Participation, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Declaration and Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children and the Jomtien Conference on Education for All) discussions and workshops revealed a mixture of progress and problems and focused on the urgent tasks facing African NGOs.

UNICEF/4909/91/Jorgen Schytte

Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe, addressing the NGO Committee on UNICEF Forum meeting in his country, called AIDS the single greatest problem facing Africa. Pictured here are Ugandan children learning about the disease.

Progress and problems

President Mugabe praised NGOs for their concrete achievements in Africa, for their role as child advocates and innovators of action. He pointed to the large number of African governments that had signed and ratified the Convention, major improvements in child health care, and the growing recognition among African leaders that development cannot succeed without the full participation of women. To support this progress, Zimbabwe has exempted health and education from the budget cuts and staff reductions required by the country's Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). But, he cautioned, "unless we are able to control it now", AIDS is the single greatest problem that could "reverse all the progress made during the last decade." It was noted that 10 million children in Africa are expected to be orphaned by the year 2000.

NGOs expressed great concern about the issue of coping with AIDS orphans, a problem compounded by increasing urbanization. With the breakdown of the extended family, Africans must find new solutions that are less costly and more emotionally satisfying to children than institutional solutions. The Forum committed itself to helping restore the role of the family in preventing the spread of AIDS, to promoting education and to providing counselling to AIDS victims and their families.

Participants agreed that other daunting obstacles must be overcome for African NGOs to maximize their effectiveness in achieving Summit goals. Such obstacles include: inadequate infrastructures, facilities and trained personnel; the destruction of positive traditional value systems — especially those which strengthen the family; persistent gender disparity; continuing armed conflicts and their devastating impact on children.

A major focus of the Forum, stressed by keynote speaker, Mary Racelis, UNICEF Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa, was self-reliance and elimination of the aid-dependency syndrome, while ensuring that Northern countries recognize and respect differing priorities and agendas of the South. "Crucial here is the commitment to identifying local resources before seeking external assistance." At the same time, she urged NGOs to ensure that donor agencies and governments do not use popular participation to "offload their own responsibility for funding community improvement."

Another major focus of the Forum was the changing roles and status of girls and women and the importance of women in positions of power and authority at all levels. Proposed strategies gave top priority to girls' and women's education, providing greater access to quality education at all levels, especially in science and technology, without creating a disadvantage for boys. NGOs expressed the need to encourage more gender-neutral childrearing behaviours and attitudes by both mothers and fathers. Enlightened well-informed men should be encouraged to team up in pressuring other men to change policies and priorities.

Participants also expressed concern that Structural Adjustment Programmes are often incompatible with democracy and human development, and are systematically used to divert resources from basic needs to debt servicing at the expense of the most vulnerable groups, especially women and children. They called for NGOs in the North to persuade donor agencies to place responsible conditions on borrowing and lending and to expose governments to the detrimental effects of debt servicing.

NGO representatives agreed on the need to hold their governments accountable for the obligations they undertake, and to address collectively government abuses, such as the misuse of resources, especially with regard to armament procurement. They also stressed the importance of NGOs becoming more accountable to the communities they serve.

Bringing together NGOs with child-related programmes from 34 African countries to share information and experience and draw on the resources of experts was a big step toward ending the isolation of working alone. Building networks and strengthening South/South cooperation as partners in advocacy can only increase their impact and effectiveness.

Contributors to this article include: Meg Gardinier (International Catholic Child Bureau); Penny McArthur (La Leche League); Dan Wegener (Baha'i International). For copies of "The Kadoma Declaration", the Forum's document of issues and recommendations, contact: NGO Committee on UNICEF, UNICEF House, 3 UN Plaza, H-6F, New York, NY 10017.

Day of the African Child

Every year, June 16 is the "Day of the African Child" in commemoration of the massacre of Soweto children in 1976. A commemoration and a celebration, the Day focuses on the plight *and* the promise of African children through a wide range of activities — from sporting events to concerts, seminars, church services and children's parliaments. "We want to focus on solutions that have worked", said Djibril Diallo, UNICEF coordinator, such as small-scale agricultural projects, immunization and basic education, "to get the debate going."

In its first year, UNICEF organizers were satisfied by the overall success of the Day and the strong participation by governments, cultural and intellectual workers and the children themselves in 46 out of 51 African countries and 12 industrialized nations. They acknowledged, however, the limited role of NGOs in initiating activities, pointing to the small budget and short lead time of four months, while most NGOs need a year to prepare. But, according to Diallo, "this was not a mega event." NGOs were encouraged to use the day as "a barge pole" or mobilizing tool.

To get the debate going, ***NGO Action for Children*** talked to a number of NGO representatives in the US, Europe and Africa, asking for their comments on the Day and its broader meaning for their particular organization. Mostly, they said that they had heard of it too late, or they were too busy coping with emergencies, but they thought the Day was a good idea. A few of their comments follow.

Karen Donovan is Associate Director in the Public Information Department of **Catholic Relief Services** in the US, which has offices in 28 African countries:

Africa is forgotten. Most people in the United States don't even know it is a continent of 51 diverse countries and many more cultures. They hear about the endless list of needs for African children — food, schools, medicine, homes. And they feel powerless to help when it is all negative. All they do is give money and nothing ever happens. "Oh", they say, "not Ethiopia again. I thought we solved that problem." A day like this can emphasize the positive aspects of Africa and educate people here.

Thomas Hildebrande is Coordinator for Africa at **Save the Children, Sweden:**

An event like this is worthwhile just as long as it is placed in the broader social, economic and political context. In some countries up to 70 per cent of the budgets have been spent on war, leaving no money for other things. It is not possible to build either health clinics or a healthy environment for children in this climate.

We are trying to change the way we are working, to dare to bring forward the underlying reasons why there is famine, why families are starving and dying, to dare to bring forward issues that will pressure governments to change policies. We are supporting grass-roots groups which have the strength to work in developing the rights of children to influence their own governments. But doing this — bringing out the issues that will pressure governments to change their policies — is sometimes asking for trouble in the countries where we have offices.

Odhiambo Anadleti, Programme Officer, **Oxfam (UK)**:

I would like to see the Day of the African Child expanded to include more on children between the ages of five and eight. That is when they are left alone more or less. They are supposed to fend for themselves, know when the meal times are. There is no planning. Their parents are too busy. In most countries, schools start at age seven or eight; before that there is a three-year gap and a precarious time.

Oxfam is in primary health care. We see a mother come into the clinic with two kids under five. Where is her six-year-old? Maybe he plays by himself while his mother is in the clinic, or he is left at home or in the

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The ABCs of girls' education

UNICEF/4486C/Lauren Goodsmith

A girl child's survival and development is inextricably linked to her mother's literacy.

Forty-three years ago, the nations of the world affirmed the universal right to education in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Today, 100 million children, 60 million of them girls, have no access to primary schooling. Close to 1 billion adults are illiterate, 650 million of them women. The linkages between women's self-confidence, girls' education and child survival and development are inextricable. There is a direct correlation between the rates of female literacy, infant mortality, overall fertility, life expectancy and GNP. Development, new studies show, begins at conception, and a child of one has already learned to fail or succeed. At birth, in many regions of many countries, the girl child is already the 'lesser' child, receiving less of everything: food, love, attention.

These are some of the hard facts confronted by a group of more than 100 representatives from international NGOs, the four sponsors of the Jomtien Conference (the World Bank, UNICEF, UNESCO and UNDP), private and governmental donor agencies, and national NGOs from Africa, South Asia and Latin America at a two-day conference on "NGOs and the Advancement of the Education of the Girl Child", held at UNICEF House, New York, 18-19 November. Furthering the stated goals of Jomtien, that gender equality in education is "the most urgent priority", the mandate of the conference was to develop strategies to combat the worldwide epidemic of gender disparity and to feed specific recommendations into the International Consultative Forum on Education for All, held in December 1991 in Paris.

The purpose of the Paris Forum was to discuss actions taken since the Jomtien Conference and future directions in order to meet the goals established at Jomtien. All of the sponsors and co-sponsors of the Jomtien Conference attended the Paris Forum.

But along with the hard facts are many international and grass-roots community-based programmes that are working to raise awareness of the problem and bring about real improvement in girls' education. According to Doris Riehm, Vice-President of WAGGGS (World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts) and co-chair of the Education Working Group of the NGO Committee on UNICEF, which organized the consultation, "We wanted to strengthen our knowledge base of those programmes that use political will and advocacy to bring about change and also work within the specific culture and social context of the country or local region."

'Collaboration', 'linkages', 'whole child' and 'community ownership' were key phrases that emerged from a day and a half of discussion and debate. They referred to linkages between attitudes and practices, between a girl's education, every stage of her life and every aspect of her physical and social environment, and collaboration among diverse NGOs working 'on the ground' with each other as well as with governments, educators, health officials, donor agencies and other members of the international community that work with families.

The overriding conclusion of experience, of numerous studies and research, said Aklilu Habte, UNICEF Special Education Adviser, is that "many facets of a girl's contributions to society are being missed because she is not getting equal treatment." Advocacy groups need to be developed "all the way down to the mother, father and local community. Who else is better qualified to reach down to earth, to get this message across, than the NGO community. But", he warned, "don't expect that message to come from political leadership. They will make the platitude, the blandishment, and leave it there."

Other important issues and conclusions that emerged from the conference were:

• **Raising the volume of local voices** and community ownership of projects. Local communities must identify their own needs and help design and implement their own programmes. By involving communities in developing their own educational programmes, these programmes will not only become relevant to local needs, but also instrumental in redressing the imbalance between boys and girls.

• **Making links between formal and non-formal education**. Improving the quality of formal education and feeding graduates of non-formal education into the system.

• **Bringing fathers into the process** of encouraging and supporting their daughters' education.

• **Making 'trickle up' work**. Identifying, developing criteria and evaluating 'on the ground' programmes that are doable, cost-effective and sustainable. Learning how to get them off the ground by replication of their 'process', incorporating diverse local needs and personalities.

• **Bringing to the table *men* in powerful government positions**, the Ministers of Finance and others who allocate resources for education. Convincing them that girls' education is a development issue, that there is a strong correlation between higher education for girls and higher income, and that educating girls is a good investment.

The consultation recommended to the Paris Forum that all United Nations agencies, donor agencies, NGOs and governments:

• Recognize the significance of the very early years of the child in its learning and development, and strengthen the family and community support to the girl child through early intervention programmes and policies;

• Actively promote policies and programmes in favour of girls in order to eliminate gender disparity;

• Develop a systematic database within each country on children's access and participation in education that includes the gender factor;

• Involve communities in developing educational programmes, both formal and non-formal, in order to make education more relevant to children's needs and advance the girl's place in society;

• Identify a number of flagship countries in which a partnership of government, donors and NGOs will develop a model of collaborative efforts to actively reduce the gender disparity in education;

• Establish national commissions including NGOs, to actively promote and coordinate advocacy and social mobilization programmes aimed at fostering positive attitudes towards girls and women;

• Make the issue of girls' education the major agenda item for the next International Consultative Forum on Education for All.

For a copy of the consultation proceedings, contact: NGO Committee on UNICEF, UNICEF HOUSE, 3 UN Plaza, H-6F, New York, NY 10017.

Day of the African Child

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village compound where no one cares for him. I would like to use the Day of the African Child to get people to think about the global state of African children — not only their health but their socialization and environment.

Sitmbise Nyoni, Coordinator, **Organization of Rural Associations for Progress (ORAP)**, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe:

This Day is a reminder of the young people in Soweto who demonstrated courage in a way that adults could not. It was a day that made history because of children who felt so strongly that they decided to organize themselves and do something.

Since the situation of children in Africa has deteriorated because of war, drought or violence, it is important to build a future. And children are the foundation of the future.

But we can't separate the parent and the child. The courage to be what you are is based on what you learn from your parents. When that experience is so bad, we have to work even harder.

You and I are children and we are also parents. My greater work for Africa begins when I go home at night and interact with my children. My responsibility is to create a secure environment in which they can think and grow and prepare for their future. If I am not able to do that, history is short-circuited.

The Day of the African Child brings attention to the strengths we have; it brings hope and opportunity to share the dilemma that African families find themselves in today.

Jim Cason, Associate Director, **Africa Fund, USA:**

A lot of work we do is with South Africa where 50 per cent of the population is under 15. We try to tie the Day of the African Child with the problems Africa will face in the future: the problems of new governments and a generation of children who didn't get enough education, for whom there is no prospective employment, for whom there may be no housing. The Day can highlight some of those issues.

It is time for NGOs to begin to incorporate their plans to honour this Day in 1992 and in years to come, and to think about how to make the celebration an effective impetus to action.

Applying for UNCED

Attention all NGOs who want to participate in the Prepcom IV in New York, 2 March- 3 April 1992, and/or in the UNCED Conference in Brazil, 1-12 June 1992. The deadline for accreditation is 21 February 1992 and applications must include:

1. Name of organization.
2. Copy of latest annual report or statutes of organization.
3. Short description of how your NGO relates to UNCED. Information on its governing body and how chosen.
4. Location of NGO headquarters.
5. Date of establishment of NGO.

Send information to: Yolanda Kakabadse, UNCED Secretariat, Rte de Florissant, P.O. Box 80, CH-1231 Geneva, Switzerland. Telephone: 41-22-7891676; fax: 41-22-7893536.

The schools that BRAC built

An interview with BRAC programme officer, Sayeeda Anis.

There are many successful grass-roots programmes in education, but few more talked about than BRAC's (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee). Founded in 1972 as a refugee relief organization, following the war of liberation, BRAC soon recognized the need for permanent solutions and developed programmes in credit, health and multisectoral development. In 1985 this NGO began its educational programme with 22 experimental schools. Today it runs 6,000 non-formal primary schools with a staff of 4,000, providing basic education for 180,000 rural children, 70 per cent of them girls.

The average cost is US$15 per child per year compared to US$17 in the formal school system. Receiving its primary support from governments and international agencies, BRAC earns 32 per cent of its income from investments in commercial projects and several in-house enterprises that include a printing press and a fish freezing plant. "What makes BRAC so effective?" and "How can it be replicated?" are questions repeatedly asked by NGOs and international agencies.

How do you explain BRAC's spectacular success?

Everything we do is unconventional and unorthodox. We have direct access to top management which understands community needs. We have no obstacles to making decisions, no layers of bureaucracy to go through. If we have a good idea, we do it.

For every programme we do, we evaluate, revise, rethink and rev se again. If it isn't working after a time, we modify or drop it. We're not scared to take risks. We go into anything that might have an impact and push a little further. In 1985 we had 22 schools. In 1992 we have 6,300. By 1998 we will have 100,000.

How does BRAC get its ideas for programmes?

We respond to a need and one thing builds on another. We had a terrible cyclone in May in the southern belt where there is a very high illiteracy rate. We sent relief and, when things settled down, somebody said, "Let's do a reforestation programme that will protect the soil from erosion and flooding." And that led to income-generating projects like planting and building roads. Then somebody said, "The people need more permanent protection from the cyclone." So we built concrete shelters and then got the idea to use the shelters as schools. Now we have 80 schools on Kutubdia Island.

Do you provide material incentives to bring girls to school?

Just books.

How do you keep girls in school?

Classes are fun. Even during the rainy season, kids have swum to school. In fact, each day has 40 minutes of fun time — singing, dancing, drawing. There is ***no*** *punishment, but there is praise, clapping and dancing for the child by the other children. It's a very human programme and our staff are highly motivated. When we asked parents if their children enjoyed school and what they liked best, they said, "Our children like the teacher. She's so good to them. She doesn't beat them. She talks to them as a friend."*

How do you sustain a programme once it starts?

With careful monitoring and constant follow-up. Every day our staff has contact with parents and teachers. If a child is sick or attendance drops, the programme organizer rushes to her house to see why she hasn't come to school. We do a lot of motivational training of our staff, and once on the job they become like family, and an extension of the community.

Children attending BRAC schools spend part of their day singing, dancing and applauding each other's achievements.

Is local ownership part of your success?

It's essential. Involved parents feel that when the school is running well, it's because of their participation. It's really an art to convince them, especially parents of girl drop-outs. Previously they would say, "She has to be married; there's no need for school." Once they see their child is happy, they jump in.

Have you been able to replicate BRAC?

Other NGOs took our materials, were trained by us and started schools, but they failed. Then we modified the programme, picked out NGOs we wanted, invited them to a two-day workshop and told them that if they were interested, they would have to follow our guidelines. That included monitoring, materials and a surprise visit. Then we would support them.

What do you think went wrong?

They failed because they don't think supervision is important enough. They think that one visit in 10 days is fine. But you have to do it every day and just a visit isn't even enough. You have to talk to the parents and build up personal relations with them.

What improvements would BRAC like to see now in its own programmes?

More education of fathers about why it's good to send their daughters to school. The school buildings could also be improved. There is no electricity, no light or heat. All the warmth comes from the teachers and programme organizers.

Skill training provides hope for Peru's youth

By Margaret Bald

In the desert outskirts of Lima, sprawling shantytowns, called *pueblos jovenes* or young towns, are home to over one third of the city's residents. The youth of the *pueblos jovenes* have been hit hardest by Peru's soaring unemployment rates. Increasing numbers of unskilled young people, frustrated by the lack of job opportunities, turn to crime to survive and are at risk of recruitment by terrorist movements.

In the *pueblos jovenes* of Villa El Salvador, Comas and San Juan Lurigancho, an innovative and effective Youth Employment and Training Project sponsored by CARE-Peru addresses this crisis. The key to the programme's success is combining training with paid apprenticeships in family-owned cottage industries that manufacture clothes, shoes, furniture and other basic consumer goods for local markets.

These small-scale industries are among the few sources of employment actually located in *pueblos jovenes*. By creating jobs for youth and supporting the growth of small businesses in their own communities, the programme produces a multiplier effect, lending economic vitality to Lima's most disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods.

At Confecciones Eva Luz, a one-room clothing business run out of its owner's modest home in the Collique section of Comas, 19-year-old Nancy Cruz sits behind a sewing machine working on a denim miniskirt. After six weeks of instruction in garment-making at a CARE-sponsored workshop and two months of on-the-job apprenticeship, she is satisfied with her progress toward self-sufficiency. "I had other temporary jobs before, in a book bindery and a furniture store, but sewing gives me a chance for a career."

At a carpenter's workshop in the Carmen section of Comas, CARE programme graduate Oscar Herrara Sanchez is now self-employed, sharing work space with the carpenter with whom he had apprenticed. "Before, I had jobs as a security guard and a bricklayer, but I didn't learn anything. I wanted something of my own, some skills that would be marketable."

Young people from age 16 to 25 receive six weeks of training followed by several months of apprenticeship in shoemaking, carpentry, garment-making or mechanics. Apprentices receive a stipend equivalent to 80 per cent of the minimum wage, shared equally by CARE and the employer. Most graduates remain employed in the businesses where they apprenticed; others find different jobs in the same trade or even start their own businesses.

Men and women participate equally in the programme. Though women represent the vast majority of trainees in garment-making and men predominate in carpentry and mechanics, there has been an unexpected interest by women in shoemaking, traditionally a male-dominated trade.

To recruit employers, CARE tapped the network of small manufacturers in the *pueblos jovenes* who had received credits or technical assistance from CARE's Small Enterprise Development Programme, maximizing the impact of both projects.

"Some of the business owners did not want to participate at the beginning", said Victor Condor, youth project director in Villa El Salvador. "They were afraid of being robbed, afraid to work with teenagers. We had to sit down with small groups to convince them. But now the project is fully accepted."

Peru's severe economic recession has presented chronic difficulties for the programme. In 1990, because of daytime power shortages, apprenticeships in Comas were interrupted for five months. Businesses could run machinery only at night and this created problems for some of the apprentices, especially the women. Production slow-downs have resulted in frequent evaluations of the training programme. Metalwork training was dropped, for example, after the first group of graduates could not find jobs.

Despite these problems, three quarters of the 310 young people who completed the programme by June 1991 found immediate employment.

The total cost for the project over a two-and-a-half-year period was US $397,000, including US$40,000 provided by small business owners for stipends. It is now being studied as a model by other NGOs in Peru. CARE plans to expand the programme to 15 shantytowns in three additional regions of the country.

Margaret Bald is a freelance writer who frequently reports about Peru.

NGO Action for Children

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RESOURCES

UNICEF Publications
The following publications are available for sale from UNICEF, RPPL, H-12G, 3 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017, USA. Available in English unless otherwise noted.

The State of the World's Children 1992 report, by James P. Grant. Published by Oxford University Press for UNICEF. Available in many languages. Paperback US$7.50.

Basic Education and National Development: Lessons from China and India, by Manzoor Ahmed, with Cheng Kai Ming, A.K. Jalaluddin and K. Ramachandran. UNICEF, 266 p. Hardcover US$44.95. Paperback US$24.95.

Arms and the Child: A SIPRI Report for UNICEF on the Impact of Military Expenditure in Sub-Saharan Africa on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children, by Saadet Deger and Somnath Sen. Staff Working Paper No. 9. 53 p. US$8.95.

Children and the Transition to the Market Economy, Safety Nets and Social Policies in Central and Eastern Europe, by G.A. Cornia and S. Sipos, 2nd printing, Avebury, 1991, 251 p. US$17.

Educating Girls and Women: A Moral Imperative, by the Education Section, UNICEF. Monograph. Approx. 30 p. US$4.95.

A subscription to the International Pediatric Association/UNICEF/WHO publication — *International Child Health: A Digest of Current Information* — may be obtained from the Distribution Unit, UNICEF, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland. Four issues US$48. Single copies US$15.

The following publications are available in English from UNICEF International Child Development Centre, Spedale degli Innocenti, Piazza SS Annunziata 12, 50122 Florence, Italy.

Innocenti Update. Quarterly newsletter on activities related to the Centre's work, meetings, and publications. Free.

Innocenti Global Seminar Reports: *Early Child Development*, by Cassie Landers. 1990. US$10.

Participatory Development by Bilge Ogun and Karen Housten Smith. 1991. US$10.

Innocenti Occasional Papers: *Rural Differentiation, Poverty and Agricultural Crisis in Sub-Saharan Africa: Toward An Appropriate Policy Response*, by Giovanni Andrea Cornia and Richard Strickland. 1990. US$6.

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Fiscal Shock, Wage Compression and Structural Reform: Mexican Adjustment and Educational Policy in the 1980s, by Fernando Valerio. 1991. US$6.

Other Publications
A Chance to Live, by Dr. June Goodfield, is the title published in the USA by Macmillan Publishing Co., 866 Third Ave, New York, NY 10022, USA. Hardcover only: US$22.95.
In the UK the title is *The Planned Miracle*, available from Macdonald Publishing, 165 Great Dover Street, London SE1 4YA, UK. Hardcover £14.99. Paperback £4.99. This book complements the television programme on the immunization story, *The Planned Miracle: A Chance to Live*.

Women and the Environment, prepared by Annabel Rodda; in the Women and World Development Series. Zed Books, 57 Caledonian Road, London N1 9BU, UK. Hardcover £29.95/US$49. Paperback £9.95/US$15.95. Plus postage £1.25/**US$2 per order**.

UNICEF Videos
A number of audiovisual materials are available on loan from UNICEF offices and National Committees. *(Check with your local office for titles.)*

World Health Organization and UNICEF Immunization Feature — 6.39 minutes. Overall view of the huge efforts to immunize 80 per cent of the world's children. English, French, Spanish.

The World Mobilizes for Universal Child Immunization — 9.06 minutes. Presents the social mobilization elements involved in achieving the 80 per cent child immunization coverage. English, French, Spanish.

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First Call for Children

First Call for Children is a quarterly publication produced by the Division of Information, UNICEF New York.

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